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Defense Still Lags

The whole world is waiting for the answer to the question: Will America do enough and do it in time? Mr. Knudsen has just released figures showing that the total production of military airplanes this year will reach 20,000, instead of 18,000 as had been expected. President Roosevelt has called for a substantial increase in heavy long-distance bombers which England could use against objectives in Central Europe. The President's appeal is timely, but we hope he will not content himself with a pious admonition. Reports from Washington say that the defense program is still lagging for causes that could be remedied without serious difficulty. There is lack of centralized authority and clear-cut responsibility. Too many men are still trying to retain a large element of business as usual; it is hard to believe, for example, that we can next year afford 80 percent of our production of passenger automobiles. The country needs comprehensive, firm action on priorities. It needs wholesale subcontracting. It needs greatly expanded objectives. Perhaps more than anything else, it needs at this moment a candid, clear statement by the President of just where we stand, not more sonorous generalities, but hard facts which will convince the country that it knows the bad as well as the good.

Trouble in Irak

The British situation in the Middle East is undoubtedly a serious one. The RAF should be able to dispose of the Irak flyers without much trouble and may have already done so; but the Germans will be a different matter. Everyone has been assuming that even if the Turkish government coöperated with the Germans (and it gives increasing signs of doing so), the lack of roads and railroads would prove a serious obstacle. But the Germans have two additional ways that do not touch on central Turkey. One is to fly their troops from Greece into Syria and the other is to cross the Black Sea and come down through the northeast corner of Turkey, and Irak or Iran. The terrain is difficult but not impossible. The only military obstacle to the second of these courses would be Russia, and as usual, Stalin gives no evidence of daring to thwart the Germans even if he wanted to. The Arabs throughout this part of the world have been subjected to heavy Nazi and Italian propaganda, not to speak of bribery; and they have grievances against the British, over Palestine and other matters, that go back many years. We should face the fact of possible serious reverses in Asia Minor, and should remember that England can lose this whole part of the world and still fight on, aided by America, with an excellent chance of final success.

Hitler's Speech

Perhaps the most constant element in Herr Hitler's character is his ability to repeat the same remarks over a period of years. His recent speech, apart from his own version of the Balkan campaign, was primarily another description of himself in the role of Patience forced off her monument by a gang of international

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Jews and drunken Englishmen. The few non-personal remarks were carefully calculated: we understand the Italians were elated by the small compliments tossed at Mussolini. Herr Hitler clearly hoped to elate the Greeks as well, by praising their courage and singling them out as Germany's only worthy enemy to date. Hungary and Bulgaria were given sympathetic pats on the back and a special appeal was made to Turkey and the ghost of Kemal Ataturk. In short, apart from presenting the Führer in his usual role of the misunderstood lover of peace, the speech was directed toward whipping in the Eastern components of the New Order. It tells us nothing we had not known before and a great deal that no amount of telling will make us believe.

The United States as Appeaser

The first result of the President's hurry-up order to the machine-tool industry has been the cutting off of machinery shipments to Russia. The point is that we need the machine tools for the defense of democracy, and that since we can't be sure Russia will not use them for exactly opposite ends, we shall keep them ourselves. Thus ends one form of appeasement. There is another that needs killing. While there has been doubt about Russia, about Japan there has been none at all. We know that she is an out-and-out Axis member who hates us and everything we stand for in the world today, and who will turn upon us the moment she dares. Here is a sea power which has been our only certain rival for the last quarter-century, and for the last decade has carried out aggrandizement in China—with oil and gasoline largely from the United States. We have always shipped her more than we sent to China. Today we still give her oil. At this moment, when our own defense production is halted for want of steel, we are still shipping steel to Japan.

A "Token Bombing" of New York?

In Washington they are saying that a "token bombing" of New York, Boston or some other Atlantic Coast seaport is not impossible. The Germans might send over a special small and very fast aircraft carrier for this purpose, hoping to elude the British blockade, or they might even knock down a light bomber and put it on board a big submarine. In either case, the plane would be launched from a spot near the American coast, and would attempt to drop its bombs and get away before any defense could be mobilized. Such a bombing of course would have no possible military objectives. It is suggested, however, that the Germans might undertake it in order to frighten the Americans, make them insist on keeping war materials at home and thereby interfere with the flow of supplies to the British. The whole scheme sounds fantastic. If the Germans tried it, they would speedily find that they were gambling on nonexistent elements in the American character. We can think of nothing more likely to arouse furious determination to enter the war with full strength and to win it than such a contemptuous gesture by the Reich.

Irresponsible Seniors

Reports from Washington indicate that a cabal of Republicans and Southern Democrats is determined to make Senator Reynolds of North Carolina chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, under the seniority rule. He is not qualified to hold that position. Everyone knows it. He is wanted as chairman by those who wish to undercut the nation's decision to give full aid to Britain; and by congressmen in the tradition of Uncle Joe Cannon who wish to insulate the power of congressional committees as much as possible from the will of the electorate. The seniority rule gives us Representative Sumners of Texas as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and Representative Vinson of Georgia as chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee. It puts Representative Cox of Georgia in line for the next chairmanship of the enormously important House Rules Committee. One sentence in Senator Norris' modest autobiography in "Who's Who"—"led fight in House of Representatives which overthrew Cannonism"—tells the story of one of the most difficult and important of George W. Norris' many gallant battles for democracy. Senator Norris cannot fairly be asked to take up this fight. Dare we hope for another Norris?

Negroes in the Ford Strike

To those who have been puzzled by the race issue in the Ford strike, the May number of the The Crisis will be illuminating. In an article on "Stooges for Ford," this official organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People explains that the flivver king hires between 10,000 and 14,000 Negroes out of a total of 85,000 men at River Rouge, making him easily the largest employer of Negro labor in Detroit. In contrast with General Motors and others, he also gives them opportunity to rise above menial rank. This, together with propaganda among Detroit Negro leaders, has set Ford up as a kind of hero among Negroes in many places. At the time of the strike the UAW-CIO was reported to have enrolled some 3,000 Negroes. When the strike was called, 1,500 Negroes, together with some maintenance workers, remained in the plant. After one bloody clash with pickets, they stayed there, fed by the company and reportedly paid a dollar an hour on a twenty-four-hour basis. The union charged that many of these men had been especially imported in anticipation of the strike. In any event, they refused to come out either at the behest of Federal Conciliator Dewey or of various Negro organizations, and the end of the strike found them still holding the fort for Ford.

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Jay Allen in Jail

Jay Allen is a crack American newspaperman. He is also, as many thousands of people know, a good friend of democracy here and in other countries. In March he was arrested by the Germans, with sixty other people, for having illegally crossed the border from unoccupied into occupied France. His transgression seems to have been that he had failed to learn of a new regulation requiring one extra stamp on his visa—a regulation which, for all we know to the contrary, may have been promulgated for the express purpose of getting him into trouble. Nearly all the sixty others have been released after a small fine or a few days in prison, and it looks very much as though Jay Allen's eight weeks in jail represent deliberate discrimination against him by the Germans because he is an American. His treatment is in marked contrast to that of von Werra, the German aviator who escaped from a Canadian prison and entered the United States. Von Werra was given his liberty on bail while here and was furnished protection. If protests by the American government to Germany are unavailing in the Allen case, some other country—in South America, for instance—should be asked to intervene. It is a disgrace that this outstanding American should be persecuted by the Germans for his loyalty to this country's ideals.

Organizing the Publishers

The Book and Magazine Guild has just had its sixth anniversary. As the only "white collar" trade union in the publishing industry, it has signed contracts with publications such as The New Republic and The Saturday Review of Literature, as well as with a large number of the younger progressive publishing houses, including Alfred A. Knopf, Random House, Viking Press, Vanguard, Modern Age and Bobbs-Merrill. The union cannot be completely successful, however, unless this organizing spreads to the older publishing houses as well. In two of those houses, Harpers and Dutton's, the Guild has been making considerable headway. Both cases will shortly come before the NLRB for decision as to the Guild's status as collective-bargaining agent. The NLRB's findings, as well as the attitude of these two houses toward the whole question of organization, are important. The right of workers to collective bargaining is as valid in the office as it is in the factory.

Business Men Hate Waste

The waste from strikes must stop, says Representative Cox pugnaciously. There is a stockholder of Republic Steel who put money into that company for the serious purpose of making more money, who has been thinking about this question and has come up with an idea. Republic Steel, you recall, embarked on a labor policy in 1935 which, during the two following years, succeeded in breaking almost every provision of the Wagner Act. A strike resulted, the bloody one you remember well. It was an expensive one, also. Strike-breakers cost the company about $200,000, tear and vomiting gas and other munitions about $300,000 and legal fees about $150,000. Suits by bystanders who were assaulted and injured came to $2,000,000, loss to the company from cessation of business is estimated at $2,500,000 and additional millions in back wages may have to be paid to workers. The stockholder has brought suit against the directors of the company for the money wasted by this strike. The supreme court of the state of New York has held, in considering an academic state of facts, that where directors deliberately spend corporate funds to break the Wagner Act, they will be personally liable in action by stockholders. The suggestion that they be held responsible in specific cases will of course have the support of Mr. Cox and of all business men who abhor waste.

News Notes of a Week

The Federal Communications Commission ordered the National Broadcasting Company to drop one of its two national networks. "Monopolistic," said the FCC. "Anarchy," replied NBC. . . . Bethlehem Steel signed a contract with the CIO, covering its Hoboken shipyard. Felicitations all around, especially for Mrs. Elinore Herrick of the NLRB. . . . The tax expert of the United States Chamber of Commerce doesn't like the Treasury's income-tax proposals. He wants a sales tax. . . . The Supreme Court ordered California to appear to defend the state's "Okie" law, barring migrants. If the argument against the law offered by Samuel Slaff before the Court is upheld, a new "fundamental liberty"—freedom of movement—will be protected from infringement by state action. . . . Speaking (very carefully) at Woodrow Wilson's birthplace at Staunton, Virginia, FDR said Wilson's faith in freedom is the kind "for which we have fought before . . . and for the existence of which we are ever ready to fight again."

Military experts say German tactics in by-passing Tobruk may have been mistaken. The assumption is that the city can be captured, but that its present threat holds up a further German offensive and gives Wavell important time. Hanson Baldwin in The New York Times reported the use of a new "acoustic" mine by Germans in Tobruk harbor. The mine is supposedly exploded by the sound of a ship's propellers. . . . Churchill gave Beaverbrook a new job, "Minister of State"; the title is translated as meaning that the first purpose of the state of Great Britain is to speed up war production. . . . Foreign Minister Suñer of Spain attacked the "pluto-democracies." Preparatory to a German attack on Gibraltar? . . . British-American oil companies in the Netherlands Indies renewed their sales contracts with Japan, promising the Japanese 1,800,000 tons a year.

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Face the Facts

One of the important phenomena about our present situation is the reluctance of the American people as a whole to face the facts about the balance sheet of the war up to date. We do not call this a surprising phenomenon, for it is not; the reluctance of all mankind to confront disagreeable truths is one of its most notorious and unfailing characteristics. This time, however, we must break through the old patterns if we are to survive at all as a people. Wishful thinking is a luxury we can no longer afford.

What many Americans still do not seem to understand is that you cannot beat guns just with words, but with more guns. Morale is certainly important, but it is important in conjunction with adequate military equipment and not as a substitute. As between men fighting on equal terms, high courage may possibly count for 15 or 20 percent in the result, but the remaining decisive majority which determines the outcome is guns, ammunition, airplanes, tanks, strategy, tactics, boldness, energy. A combatant who fights bravely but without adequate preparation may go down in history as one of the heroic vanquished; but that is no substitute for victory.

Over and over again, we have told ourselves stories about the German strength, only to have them proved untrue in the course of Hitler's amazing unbroken series of victories. Some of these falsehoods are listed by William Henry Chamberlin in the May issue of Harpers, and all of them can be recalled by anybody with a reasonably good memory. We have been telling ourselves for years that the Germans were suffering nervous exhaustion from the strain of their life and would soon crack up; but they show few signs of it. It was said that the German army would soon bog down for lack of gasoline and lubricating oils; but its wheels have continued to turn, and the more than a dozen countries that have been overrun must look back with grim irony on these predictions. Before France fell, the Maginot Line was supposed to be impregnable; before Greece and Yugoslavia were taken, we were told a mere handful of men could hold those mountain passes for many weeks. The British patrol in the Mediterranean was so effective, we promised each other, that German and Italian troops could not be transported to North Africa; but they were transported, and in astonishingly large numbers, equipped with surprising quantities of heavy machines.

At an earlier stage, Americans whispered hopefully that Hitler was suffering from an incurable and fatal malady—usually it was cancer of the throat—which would terminate his career in the near future. This story was varied by reports that he suffers from a progressive type of insanity which will soon destroy his mental processes beyond hope of repair. From time to time we have been told that Germany was running short of manpower, that she was sending sixteen-year-old boys out to fly patched-up airplanes without proper navigating instruments, after only a few hours' instruction. A favorite variation on this story is the one of the German airman who dumps his bombs harmlessly in an old stone quarry and then drops a note saying how many people in Germany secretly sympathize with the democracies. Such tales of German aviation are believed by civilians in a direct ratio to their distance from the fighting lines; the RAF, which really knows something about the matter, denies them all. It has found captured German pilots to be the same age as its own, and adequately trained. German planes shot down are well built and carry all necessary instruments.

The blunt truth is that Hitler at this moment is probably the most powerful absolute monarch who ever lived; certainly he has caused more suffering to more people than anybody in recorded history. Either Hitler himself or someone in his entourage is a consummate military genius. The German campaigns have been prepared with more care and foresight than were ever seen before; they have been models of strategy and daring imagination. They have also been accompanied by wholesale lying, bribery, treason, sabotage and terrorization, which the cynical Nazi mind evidently considers valuable military weapons—and thus far, events seem to show that this has been true. Hitler's astonishing success has been achieved in the incredibly short time of eight years or so. Of the six great nations of the world, two are his uneasy vassal-accomplices, one is in obvious terror lest it should be his next victim, one is fighting grimly and at a heavy disadvantage and one is just beginning to wake up to the position it will occupy in the world if his unbroken record of triumphant conquest goes on much longer.

It is part of our bad mental habit to confuse heroic retreat with victory. The British acted with utmost gallantry while getting out of Norway, but that does not offset the fact that they were caught napping by the invasion, badly bungled their expedition and were finally forced to give up their last foothold in northwest Europe. The retreat from Dunkirk was one of the great achievements of indomitable courage of all time, but it cost the British and their Allies almost the entire equipment of the British army and many thousands of lives, and it helped to seal the doom of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and France, which among them are today supplying Germany with more war materials than the United States is giving to Britain.

Similarly, British communiqués about the battles in Greece stressed the terrific German losses; some of their estimates said 70,000 Germans had been killed, as against Greek and British losses presumably far smaller. Hitler himself says his losses in the entire campaign were only about 1,500 men. But even if the British were right, what would it matter? What does Hitler care about 70,000 German lives? He has ful-

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filled his promise to drive the British off the Continent, he has opened the way to a pincers movement against Suez that may be successful, he has started war on a new front in Irak. In the face of such facts it is unrealistic in the extreme to attach importance to the reputed loss of 70,000 men out of an army of 4,500,000. That army, incidentally, has never yet been fully employed. Only a tiny fraction was used in the campaigns against Poland, Norway, Yugoslavia and Greece. Even when the fighting on the Western Front was at its height, Hitler's reserves were larger than is the entire strength of the United States army at this moment.

We have been told it is dangerous to bring such facts as the foregoing to the attention of the American people, that they are likely to be frightened into an attitude of appeasement. We do not believe this is true; but if it were true, if the Americans had grown so soft they were afraid to stand up against a tough enemy, then the sooner we found it out, and made plans accordingly, the better. Instead of favoring a concealment of the disagreeable facts, we wish President Roosevelt himself would go much farther than he has done in presenting them to the American people. When Winston Churchill followed the same course, the effect on the British was electrifying.

For in spite of Hitler's formidable record in Europe, he has never yet proved himself against an enemy who had even a fair chance of success. With the exception of France, the countries he has attacked have been one-tenth or one-fifteenth as strong as Germany; and France, with one-half the population of Germany, was defeated more by treason, disaffection and incompetence than in a fair fight. As Churchill remarked the other day, the United States and the British Commonwealth have between them 200,000,000 free white men, whereas there are only 70,000,000 Nazis at most, much of whose energies must be diverted to ruling the enslaved populations they have conquered. The United States alone has industrial capacity—which in modern war is the gauge of ultimate striking strength—substantially larger than that of Germany, in so far as the present German strength can be estimated. The seventeen experts who on May 5 issued a joint statement that Britain, with American help, has an excellent chance of winning the war, were being cautious and moderate, if one condition is met. That condition is that the Americans shall for once look squarely at the facts. They need to recognize that they must drop everything except the war, and must be prepared to fight in any part of the world and with every sort of weapon. If this means naval engagements, it means naval engagements. If it means sending American soldiers abroad, they should be sent. Either we should do nothing, which is to say that we should accept Nazi domination of the world, or we should do everything. And there is good reason to believe that Americans are not willing to give up their world without a struggle.

The Axis Shows Its Hand

THOSE who have been saying that the United States would have to reconcile itself to an Axis victory, and after all would be in no danger if Britain were defeated, should examine carefully the peace terms which have recently been suggested from Axis sources. They were published in The Japan Times Advertiser, known as an organ of the Japanese Foreign Office, soon after Foreign Minister Matsuoka's return from Berlin and Rome, and thus may be regarded as an official "feeler."

Mr. Matsuoka now denies that he hopes to come to the United States to negotiate an agreement; but the major diplomatic policy of the Axis is evidently an attempt to neutralize this country by means of threats on the one hand if we persist in giving effective aid to Britain, and promises on the other if we withdraw. The terms therefore are undoubtedly minimal, and phrased with the idea of appeasing us, rather than being a bargaining offer which might be reduced in negotiations.

Let us begin with Clause E, carefully placed in the middle of the terms. According to this, all of continental Europe would be organized as a corporate state under the German Reich, "with domestic autonomy for unit members, whose economic and political cooperation would be based on Berlin." What such "autonomy" and "coöperation" would amount to we can well imagine. Italy completely disappears from the scene except as a "junior partner."

To the Continent would be added, under Clause D, Axis domination over North Africa from Gibraltar to Somaliland, with "certain British and other African colonies." France (already in the German corporate state) might be allowed to retain some colonies under "co-administration." South Africa would become "independent"—though of course under the rule of the pro-Nazi Germans there who already have almost succeeded in keeping it out of the war. To the East (under Clause G), the German sphere of influence may go as far as the Sea of Marmora "unless that were handed over to the joint administration of Turkey and Soviet Russia." But in any case Germany would have access to the oil of Irak and Iran.

Thus the huge continental empire would reach out to tax the rich resources of Africa and West Asia. It would, of course, control the important West African ports such as Dakar. Gibraltar, the eastern Mediterranean, Malta, Aden and the Red Sea would be demilitarized (under Clause B), while Clause C demands complete withdrawal of the British navy from the Mediterranean, and joint Anglo-Axis administration of the Suez Canal.

Japan obviously reserves for herself East Asia and the Pacific. For Clause B also demands demilitarization of "all United States bases in the Pacific and any

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projects in the Aleutian Islands reaching out toward Japan," as well as Singapore and Hong Kong. Under Clause J, Soviet Russia would demilitarize Siberia and "remove the menace of Vladivostok," though in return Japan graciously offers to "reduce her forces in Manchukuo and Mongolia to the minimum required for safety." The Netherlands East Indies and French Indo-China would receive "independence," while their economies would be coördinated by Japanese advisers. The same would apply to all British possessions in the vicinity. India would obtain self-government. Australia would be compelled to remove immigration restrictions and permit Japanese settlement "on terms of equality."

It is against this background that the places assigned to Britain and the United States must be pictured. The United Kingdom would be allowed to "remain the heart of the British Empire," though what there would be left of it under these terms it is difficult to imagine, except perhaps New Zealand, an Australia rapidly becoming populated by Japanese, and Canada, to which, according to the terms, authority would gradually be transferred. It is obvious that Britain herself, robbed of her imperial resources and under continual threat of Nazi air bombs, would quickly be coördinated with Europe.

Canada, in turn, is assigned by Clause H to the sphere of influence of the United States. We may have Greenland and Newfoundland, with "islands and regional waters." Central and South America would be in our sphere also, but we must "undertake not to form hegemony over South America inimical to the Axis," and must allow there "the fullest freedom and equality of opportunity to Germany and her allies." In other words, while the Axis reserves the rest of the world for its own economic and political dominance, it wishes us to have South America open to its intrigues and penetration.

The final clause, M, is the most curious, since it reads, "Religious and political liberty would be enjoined throughout the world." Even if "enjoined" is a misprint for "enjoyed," the typesetter caught its true meaning.

Facing these gigantic empires to its east and west, and with an unlocked back gate to the south, the United States (with Britain) is granted, by Clause A, parity of naval strength with the Axis, followed by a naval holiday. Thus the Axis ensures itself against any possibility that we might interfere with its future plans by use of sea power. Master of immensely greater economic resources and of populations many times the size of ours, it would, in addition to its overwhelming land power, have a sea force equal to our own. Our isolation would be that of an inferior.

This status is made all the less attractive by the attitude of the Axis toward inferiors. "The strongest powers," states the first paragraph of the terms, "must have the greatest opportunities of developing the world and disposing of such questions as spheres of influence, resources and type of government. This is the law of nature, and attempts to maintain the status quo of dominant powers who cannot continue to function through their strength but only through alliances, must break down." Thus, being assigned a subordinate strength, we are put on notice that we shall be deprived of everything, including our "type of government," that we cannot defend.

If this is indeed the law of nature, then we had best see to it that, with or without allies, we remain stronger than the Axis. The Japan Times Advertiser admits that these are victor's terms, but says that the Axis powers have achieved a dominant position permitting liberty of dictation. Here, Mr. Lindbergh, is your "negotiated" peace. Can anyone imagine a stronger reason for seeking victory with Britain?

Repel the Real Invasion

Is a military invasion of the United States thinkable? No one of us in a position of responsibility—and since we are a self-governing country, that means every one of us—can in reason think of Dakar, think of Brazil, think of Greenland and Canada and not think further. In this issue of The New Republic, Tom Wintringham, instructor in the English Home Guard, urges the formation of a similar force in the United States for defense in depth against invasion. As we pointed out in our April 21 issue, plans for a Home Guard are already being worked upon in Washington.

Mr. Wintringham's argument is intelligent and stimulating; but our position today is different from England's. Invasion of our cities and countryside by Nazi forces is not primarily a matter of landing tanks on our shores or putting planes over Detroit. Hitler fights first with ideas. Hitler invades by disrupting, by exploiting economic, racial and religious cleavages. The pattern by now is wholly familiar. In a well planned Hitlerian invasion there is at first no shooting save by those who are taking their own lives. The implacable intention to attack coupled with devout assurances that he will not is the drill that bores the hole for the final explosive charge. In the only sense of the word which is permissible in the light of experience, invasion of the United States by Hitler is now in progress.

Would a Home Guard in the United States check or intensify this instant danger? That depends entirely on the kind of Home Guard we create. An organization such as we had in 1918, not representative of all classes in American communities, used to silence freedom of speech, used as a strikebreaking influence, used to implant fear in those suffering most from want, would be a weapon fitted for Goebbels' own hand, a disrupting and demoralizing force. A Home Guard

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dedicated to the protection and extension in the United States of the freedoms which are Mr. Roosevelt's mighty weapon against Hitler throughout the world—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear—would be a force for cohesion and safety. It could usefully prepare for the military eventuality Mr. Wintringham analyzes and perform duties of a semi-military character. Its immediate objective should be educational; its ultimate objective military.

The United States must find a way of fusing those objectives. The army may say with justification that it has no time for the former. A Home Guard organization could not say so. The man whom the President is said to have in mind for this job is Mayor LaGuardia. He should do it well. But the movement must not be launched until plans have been laid most carefully. Mistaken action in this field in the name of defense would be worse than none.

Pooh, Pooh Pulitzers

THE PULITZER AWARDS this year weren't all bad; they never are. The late Marcus Lee Hansen, author of "The Atlantic Migration," was an excellent choice for the prize in American history. Almost everyone will agree with the special citation given The New York Times "for the public educational value of its foreign-news reports": they are the most complete and in many ways the best now appearing in the world. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, another of the great American newspapers, deserves special mention for its crusade against smoke, though it is ironical that such a prize should have been given in a year when there is so much fire.

Several of the prizes seem merely timid and unimaginative. In this classification falls the award to Robert E. Sherwood for "There Shall Be No Night." Mr. Sherwood has received three Pulitzers for his last four plays and the fourth wasn't eligible, being merely an adaptation. Leonard Bacon has been writing witty, academic verse for a long time, and perhaps this year—generally undistinguished in American poetry—was a good time to recognize his work; though a much better choice would have been Conrad Aiken's sonnet sequence, "And in the Human Heart." We haven't read Ola Elizabeth Winslow's "Life of Jonathan Edwards," which received the biography award, but from the reviews it seems to be a distinguished example of what Archibald MacLeish called scholarly escapism. The prize-winning cartoon, "If I Should Die Before I Wake," by Jacob Burck of The Chicago Times, is the conventional American and slightly pharisaical lament for the misfortunes of others.

Reuben Maury, of The New York Daily News, would deserve a prize for editorial writing if it were awarded solely for vigor and candor. But his opinions are surprisingly irresponsible for the American newspaper with the largest circulation. If he suggested tomorrow that the United States ought to invade Tannu-Tuva and Sarawak in alliance with Wang Ching-wei, nobody would be surprised. Westbrook Pegler, who got the reporting prize, is one of the men responsible for turning the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain away from the liberal ideas that were represented by E. W. Scripps, and The New York World-Telegram away from all the ideals of the old World. The exposures of Scalise and other labor racketeers, while remarkable feats in themselves, were only incidents in a long anti-labor campaign. That low rumble wasn't applause; it was an earthquake over old Joe Pulitzer's grave. But worst of all was the failure of the Pulitzer Committee to give a prize for the best novel of 1940. The regulations provide that "if in any one year, no book or play . . . shall be of sufficient excellence . . . then in that case the amount of such prize or prizes may be withheld." Obviously that wasn't the case in 1940; there were at least half a dozen novels as good as most of the former prize-winners. The trouble would seem to have been that "For Whom the Bell Tolls" was too good and had too many enemies—and that the Committee, having passed it over, was afraid to make another award.

It is not important that the selections of the Pulitzer Committee disagree in every case with those of American critics as announced in the polls conducted by the Book-of-the-Month Club, The Saturday Review and the Drama Critics' Circle. After all, the critics might have been completely mistaken. What is important is that the awards reveal no consistent literary or political or social standards on the part of the Committee, except a desire to play safe, keep its collective neck in and its eyes closed to everything that is happening in the world and all the vital books that are written about it. We suggest that in 1942 there should be a special citation for Timidity and Academic Ineptitude. It would go to the Pulitzer Committee.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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Home Defense: The British Lesson

HOW ON EARTH do you defend America? The question put maps in my hands, and I found no answer to it in the sprawling coast lines, stretching from one end of the world to the other with complete disregard for strategy or for anything but their own exuberance. And the waist joining the two land masses is too narrow. Cortez proved that.

Articles in The New Republic's supplement on Democratic Defense, February 17, show that Americans are noticing most of what happened in France and in Mr. Chamberlain's Britain. Fletcher Pratt's article, "What Can We Defend?" February 24, looks over the map with an eye as displeased as mine. And he puts the matter baldly: if Britain goes down in Hitler's spring offensive this year. . . . Here, with the planes over us again tonight, and Hitler's offensive due perhaps before this gets to New York, we do not always think as bluntly as that.

Britain is not likely to go down. But a sensible soldier thinks: there is a 10-percent chance of this, a 20-percent chance of that. On that basis, how do you defend America? By making the gear: you know things about that. By making sailors, soldiers, airmen. That you are beginning. But also by knowing how war changes and getting ahead on those changes; the men who read and write The New Republic need to know something of that also. No use making the stuff and then training the men for a war that can't happen.

The war described in the United States semi-official "Complete Training, Infantry Battalion," can't happen. Never mind how that booklet came my way; and I'm not going to quote it. I know it is semi-secret as well as semi-official. But one or two of my readers will possess copies; let them look at the paragraph defining the relation between infantry and other arms. Then let them read the rest of this article.

Here in tightest-packed outline is the development of modern war. I'll draw it to put all the blame on Americans. There used to be a pleasant formal chess game called war. George Washington and Morgan's riflemen broke it up. They started the business of hide and fire, skirmishing, mobility.

Then Lee and Grant started shelter and fire. Their shelter was breastwork, not trench; but it led toward trench war. Field fortification for a whole force, across a wide front, begins with them. And at the same time Sherman showed—as others had before him, but never so well—how a mobile force raiding deep "behind the lines," cut loose from base or contact, can destroy opposing armies it never sees. In these two opposed tendencies, shown in the first modern war, is the whole pendulum-swing of war today.

In spite of field fortifications, war at first remained fairly mobile. But another American ended mobility by inventing a machine gun. Hiram Maxim's squirt for bullets locked the fronts, from October, 1914. It made a web of fire men could not break through.

In 1916 the first break came in the web. The gasoline engine, not unknown in the USA, and an American gadget, the caterpillar tractor, were fitted to some armor and some guns and proved able to go through that web. Warfare came unstuck.

Today that engine and that gadget, as the tank, are the Panzer divisions and the defeat of France.

Americans should not find my very compressed slice of military history hard to follow, up to this point. It leaves out plenty: artillery, the air weapon, poison gas, artificial smoke, the senility of some commanders and the soldier's natural love for horses. But the main line is clear enough. *You* started hide and fire, to set war moving. *You* started shelter and mechanized fire, which gripped it motionless. Then *you* invented or developed the gear that set it moving again. And even so I have left out Wilbur and Orville Wright. I wish, with planes over my house, that I could leave them out. The airplane is not, in my opinion, worth the trouble those two men took with it.

During the period 1914-17, when war was stuck, armies began by sitting down in front-line trenches opposite each other. Later they found it more comfortable to keep a few men in the front line and a lot behind, where they could counter-attack if need be. Armies had been thin lines on the map; they became thick lines—defense in depth. Then came infiltration, a method of "attack in depth." Instead of attacking in line, concentrating all your strength against the enemy's front-line soldiers, you filtered through and got behind them. The tank, in 1918, proved to be the goods for this job.

After 1918 the successful soldiers naturally went to sleep. The defeated soldiers thought. They developed "attack in depth." Today the Nazis attack, by parachutists and troops carried in planes and tank formations, so deeply that they get over and through *any* ordinary army in line, even though its line is very deep.

Some people who do not know very much about the development of modern tactics believe that the Germans invented the parachute tactic. They were the first to use it on a large scale in war, but they did not invent it. Others, better instructed, believe that the Russians invented it. They were the first to use it on a large scale in peace; but I do not believe they invented it. I believe, though at the moment I cannot check this, that Colonel William Mitchell of Pershing's AEF, later General Mitchell, first proposed the tactic late in 1917 or early in 1918. He had been impressed by the

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difficulty that British troops had discovered, or had made for themselves, when they tried to plow forward at Passchendaele through the morass made by their own heavy guns. He then, I believe, proposed that complete units of the AEF should be dropped by parachute behind the German lines, where they would start open warfare on country untouched by shell-fire. (I should be extremely grateful to any American who can confirm this belief of mine or correct it.)

The present Nazi development of attack in depth gives warfare its present extreme mobility. In order to meet these tactics of attack, a defending force must have soldiers everywhere. For the defense of America this means, if you reckon ordinary troops only, that you must have not the twenty-two divisions planned for this year, but something more like a hundred divisions. And it is physically impossible for America to possess such a number of trained and equipped regulars within the necessary period of time.

To defend America, or to make America so strong that it will never need to defend itself, each town in the Americas needs a garrison trained and equipped to delay, harass and eventually destroy the advanced units of an attacking force. This garrison in the towns and larger villages must be able to defend strong points against parachutists, against air-borne troops and against tanks. Along the coast lines, and for a considerable distance inland, these garrisons must be equipped to pin down attacking troops landing from the sea.

Such garrisons must also be trained and equipped for counter-attack against forces attacking in depth and against forces used for the protection of a landing from the sea. But these counter-attacks need only be local actions; the garrisons need not undertake large-scale combined counter-attacks. Their job is either to pin down that part of the invader's forces which does most of the real damage in modern war, or else to block the roads and other transport facilities, airfields, harbors, in such a way that the mobility of these advanced forces is greatly reduced. And they have a second tactical and strategic function: they separate the forces carrying out attack in depth from the mass of the enemy army, which necessarily consists of more normal infantry divisions. Parachutists, air-borne troops and tanks cannot achieve success without the close-linked coöperation of more solid forces. The defensive garrisons that I have described can force these more solid and slower-moving infantry units to deploy, and can hold them up.

Can these garrisons consist of full-time soldiers? America cannot train and equip so many soldiers in the necessary time, and needs its trained professionals as a mobile striking force, for forestalling an invader or for counter-attacking. And it would be great waste of men if these garrisons, strategically immobile though tactically mobile, consisted of full-time soldiers. They should be composed of civilians with arms, discipline and knowledge of the use of arms. And the arms they need for their limited purposes are principally those which mass production can most easily and most rapidly produce in enormous quantities.

Here in Britain the Home Guard is such a force. It is not an emergency force of spare-time soldiers of low quality destined to be cannon-fodder in the event of an invasion. It is our attempt to make every English village, suburb, town, factory, city, railway junction, important crossroads and center of government into a defended strong point for resistance to "attack in depth," a web of defense in which any attacker will be held inextricably for the short time necessary for our regular troops to slice him up. This web of defense as a basis for offensive action, and counter-attack is the next necessary main development of the science of war. And it is an inevitable development. We do not choose it: no one ordered the Home Guard to exist. As soon as the British people heard of parachutists dropping into Holland they began to form the first patrols. The government planned to have a force of armed civilians 250,000 strong. Nine months later, such was the pressure not only of civilians but of progressive professional soldiers, this force is nearly 2,000,000 strong. And although it works as civilians and trains only in its spare time, and must spend much of its training periods on patrols and guards, it is already a competent military organization.

You in America have the time. You have the productive capacity to arm such a force with the weapons particularly suitable to it, the submachine gun, the hand-grenade, man-stopping and tank-stopping, the small cheap mortar for its pocket artillery and the civilian truck for its transport. Your civilians have more time for training, and need not waste that time guarding against the parachutist who may land in the next open field as I write this sentence. Above all, you in America form part of a democracy. That means that you can put weapons in the hands of your citizens and obtain discipline from them because of their agreement, their consent, their beliefs.

One of the things I have been proudest of when working to form and train the Home Guard in Britain is that in this force no man can in fact be punished by his superior officer and any man can resign at a fortnight's notice. The need for punishment has scarcely been felt; seventy-five officers go through my hands each week and not one has ever suggested that he needs the power to fine or to imprison recalcitrants, or even to make them peel the potatoes. Resignations have been few. If you build such a force, your defense will look so strong to any soldier who knows his business that it will never be tested.

It is often said that a nation must go totalitarian in order to fight modern war. But in fact if you want to fight it successfully, you must go one better than the totalitarians; you must go beyond them. The Nazis

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have developed warfare to a point where the next imperative step is one they cannot take. They cannot put arms into the hands of civilian Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Danes, Dutch, Belgians, French or even Italians. If they arm civilian Germans they prepare the revolution that will destroy the Nazi system. Because they do not govern by agreement and consent, but by force and deceit, they can make little further progress in warfare. We can. Whether we in Britain can do it in time, whether we can break through our conservatism, is the question here. But you in America can do it quite certainly, without question of time and without, I believe, nearly so much question of conservatism. Starting with a new defensive army of freemen, America can also develop the methods and machines for attack that will help other nations to make secure, or to regain, their freedom.

Dorking, Surrey, England TOM WINTRINGHAM

Remaking the World of Plants

WHAT IS probably the most amazing scientific revolution in all history is going on at the present time almost unnoticed in the hurly-burly of world affairs. Because of remarkable new discoveries, scientists are now able to remake many kinds of growing plants almost at will. There is no known reason why the success already achieved with more than sixty-five sorts of flowers, fruits, vegetables, vines and trees should not be expanded to the whole world of plants, including everything from the tiniest sedum to the loftiest redwood. In some of the research laboratories where this work is being done, such as the Carnegie Institution laboratory at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, and that of the United States Department of Agriculture at Beltsville, Maryland, I have lately been privileged to see the beginnings of this latest miracle of science.

The chief new tool of the plant breeders and geneticists, though not the only one, is colchicine, a bitter and highly poisonous drug found in the roots of the autumn crocus. This drug, it was discovered about 1937, has an astonishing effect upon plant tissues when it is used in certain ways. To understand that effect, it is necessary for me to recapitulate, in a few sentences, certain fundamental facts.

All organic matter, whether plant or animal, is composed of minute cells and all growth consists of these cells reproducing themselves by division.[1] In the nucleus of each cell there are found still smaller bodies called chromosomes, and under normal circumstances the number of these in each cell never varies in any given plant or animal, one-half having been contributed by the male parent and one-half by the female. Within the chromosome are still smaller particles called genes and these infinitely tiny objects—so small that it has been suggested each one is perhaps only a single protein molecule—transmit to the new life every one of its characteristics, from human brown eyes to the elephant's trunk or the thin bark of the willow.

In 1937, after preliminary work had been done by many scientists in all parts of the world, the almost unbelievable discovery was made that when a plant is treated with colchicine, in many cases the number of chromosomes in each cell is doubled, and this characteristic then becomes hereditary. The method of treatment varies according to the plant. Usually an extremely weak solution is employed, and even this kills many of the more delicate organisms. It may be rubbed on the buds, or injected, or the whole plant or some part of it may be dipped in the solution for a longer or shorter period of time. If the solution is too strong or the exposure too lengthy, and the plant survives at all, it grows in eccentric ways. Already the scientists know what seems to be the best method of treatment for each of a large number of plants, and the boundaries of their knowledge are being pushed back daily in scores of laboratories all over America and throughout the world. Colchicine affects animal tissues as well, but thus far it has been applied only in laboratory experiments and has not yielded the enormous practical results obtained from its use on plants.

What colchicine does is to slow down the process of growth in some respects but not in all. (Two or three other drugs have similar effects, and the scientists are seeking still more.) Colchicine retards the creation of cells, but does not retard the production of chromosomes in the same degree. In some of the cells the chromosomes are doubled and redoubled until the life of the cell is destroyed. In others, duplicate, quadruplicate and octuplicate sets are produced. Tissue which buds from this mixed-up mass grows from a cell in which the set of chromosomes has been doubled, quadrupled or octupled. To be sure, this increase in the chromosome numbers is not a new thing in the world. It sometimes occurs accidentally in nature, and has occasionally been created in the laboratory with great difficulty by high and low temperatures. Some plants important to man, such as wheat, already have extra sets of chromosomes. The basic number in wheat is seven pairs and all the commercial varieties now in use have twenty-one. Scientists long ago recognized the desirability of the larger and stronger strains produced in this way. But not until the colchicine technique was developed was it possible to create such doubling prac-

1 See "The Genes and the Hope of Mankind," The New Republic, April 14.

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tically at will. Like so many of mankind's fundamental discoveries, this one came to fill a need already recognized.

Under colchicine treatment, it is not always the case that the doubling of the chromosomes is uniform throughout the tissues of a plant. Sometimes part of the tissue will have the usual two sets of chromosomes while other tissues form four or more sets.

A good deal of nonsense has been written in the Sunday supplements about colchicine, and this is a pity, because the cold scientific facts ought to be miraculous enough for anybody. Colchicine is not, as it has sometimes been loosely described, a mere growth-forcing device. On the contrary, it not only retards cell formation, but it often causes plants to be stunted or malformed, or to bloom later in the year. A colchicine-treated organism is not automatically twice or four or eight times the size of the untreated parent. It may be stronger and hardier, or it may not. In many cases size is increased; but sometimes the drug seems to stunt vertical growth, producing instead thicker stalks and bigger and heavier leaves, flowers and fruit. A result frequently observed is that, while the leaves and flowers are larger, the stalks which support them are shortened. Many times, plants treated with colchicine prove infertile, and even when this is not true the number of seeds may be only 10 or 15 percent as great as before; but one seed may be the beginning of a desirable new variety.

A fact about colchicine that has almost escaped public notice is nevertheless of enormous potential importance. For generations, gardeners have been crossing one sort of plant with another in order to bring together desirable characteristics not found in any one strain. This hybridization is not difficult, but hybrid plants thus created are usually sterile, incapable of reproducing themselves and therefore of greatly lessened utilitarian value. With the aid of colchicine, these hybrids can be made fertile. They are sterile because their chromosomes are incompatible and do not pair properly in the formation of reproductive cells. When the number of chromosomes is doubled with colchicine, each chromosome will of course have a mate and pairing will be normal. Since each chromosome is an exact duplicate of its mate, the progeny are all uniform and very vigorous. Thus a pure strain is obtained with much less emphasis on continuous back-crossing and selection than in pre-colchicine days. The scientist is able for the first time to turn out newly created forms on the production line, so to speak, with a standardized plant resulting. In the great laboratories of the Department of Agriculture at Beltsville, the other day, I saw a group of perhaps fifty onion plants that had been artificially standardized. It was like a wonder of mathematical drawing, or a Walt Disney "Silly Symphony," every plant almost exactly the same in size, color and vigor as every other one, as though they had been identical twins—which in fact they were. What has been done with onions can now be done with many other plants and, theoretically at least, with all.

This new technique can be applied to forestry with almost unbelievable results. In a native forest, trees of the same sort differ very greatly from one another, and this is true even when they are grown in the artificial environment of a nursery. Trees have not been bred by the conventional techniques heretofore available, since it would have required centuries to achieve results. The new colchicine techniques speed up the process enormously. With those trees from which sterile hybrids can be produced, we can create new types that are larger, stronger and better adapted to man's purposes than anything found in nature, and can then repeat them endlessly. Imagine a forest ten miles square of walnuts—or any one of many other varieties—every tree a magnificent example of its kind. You don't have to imagine it; if you have the time, money and inclination, science is prepared to manufacture it for you to order. By crossing a walnut that produces fine wood with one that grows very rapidly, lumber can be produced for the market many times faster than at present.

One striking use for colchicine is to create new and excessively pure strains in a great hurry. In the past, it has been necessary to inbreed plants for many generations, in most cases with the fertilization laboriously done by hand. (Even this technique has now been altered; a few lively flies in a cellophane bag tied over a flower do the work better and a hundred times faster than man.) Sometimes in nature, the number of chromosome sets spontaneously drops from two to one. This gives science a valuable opportunity for the use of colchicine. When, by this technique, the one set of chromosomes is brought up again to two, they are absolute duplicates of one another, revealing the characteristics, so to speak, of a single parent. Thus at a stroke the scientist has a completely pure strain such as could be attained in the past only after years of painstaking work, if at all.

As suggested above, too much has been said in the popular press about "giantism" as a result of colchicine treatment. It is highly unlikely that we shall see all fruits and vegetables suddenly become twice as big as before. There is no particular reason why anybody should want to eat one big strawberry instead of two or three smaller ones, and in many cases added size would be a detriment. We are building our houses smaller and with less storage space than in the past; already poultry raisers have bred the "apartment house" size of turkey for the smaller families—and ice-boxes—of today. Cabbages, heads of lettuce and many other vegetables and fruits are big enough already. In these cases, the colchicine technique can be used to improve the quality, sturdiness and resistance to disease. With lettuce, for example, it is possible to produce a crisper, thicker leaf, which is certainly an

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advantage. Colchicine is being used to help create tobacco and sugar cane which are resistant to mosaic disease, and to breed types of cotton superior to any now in existence. Indeed, there is hardly a single agricultural product of any kind in which improvement may not reasonably be expected within the next few years through the colchicine technique.

When it comes to flowers, of course, the story is somewhat different, since size is usually considered a desirable attribute and cross breeding, reinforced by colchicine, makes possible increased size, sturdiness and new colors in old familiar garden favorites. I doubt whether more than a handful of my readers have ever seen a carnation as beautiful as one I saw recently at Beltsville, the result of colchicine technique. At this moment it is possible to buy from a commercial seed house unusually large and beautiful marigolds with double the normal number of chromosomes, and any gardener who possesses one can truthfully tell his friends that it represents the first group of flowers ever sold on the market that are a chemical creation. Zinnias have been produced that are six and one-half inches across, against a normal maximum of five inches. Cosmos is one-third larger than normal. The treatment has also been used with similar results on petunias, portulaca, snapdragon, squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, spinach and lettuce. (Colchicine does not affect the autumn crocus from whose roots it is obtained.)

Colchicine has thrown a new light on the occupation of the men who have one of the most interesting and romantic jobs in the world: the plant hunters. For many years the Department of Agriculture has sent men out all over the world trying to find plants native to other lands that can be grown successfully in the United States and are superior to those already here. When a blight of some kind has threatened any given crop, this search has often become a frantic one, a race against time. For several decades the scientists have crossed the foreign plants with those at home, and thereby added to our farm crops many desirable characteristics of flavor, size, resistance to drought or disease and so on. The colchicine technique, however, has considerably facilitated their work.

The scientist when he searches for a foreign substitute today no longer looks for a complete plant that can be imported and put to work. Even before the colchicine technique, all he asked was that it should be related closely enough to the domestic one so that they could be crossed. The new techniques and skills now make this easier than ever.

The Imperial Valley, in California, is one of the great centers of cantaloupe production in the United States and a failure of that industry would bring suffering to thousands of inhabitants of the Valley. Not long ago a blight appeared which threatened to destroy all the cantaloupe vines and perhaps spread to other parts of the country. Washington, called into action, sent word of the problem flashing around the world to its representatives. One of these men, stationed in India, found, on the remote slopes of the Himalayas, a cantaloupe which carried genes immunizing it to the blight. This cantaloupe was not fit to eat—soft, pulpy and tasteless. Not so long ago, the plant hunter would have contemptuously passed it by. With the new techniques of the present, it was brought to America, and crossed and backcrossed with the Imperial Valley cantaloupe until the final product had resistance to blight, from the Himalayas, and size and flavor, from America. And the cantaloupe growers had been saved.

For complicated reasons into which we need not go, the percentage of salt in the water in some irrigated areas in Southern California is slightly increasing. This is not a serious problem to the inhabitants of that region, but it might become so to the orange trees for which the area is famous, since plants are often highly sensitive to minute quantities of chemicals. (For example, one part in a million of boron is poisonous, yet one part in two million is needed to keep plants alive.) The Department of Agriculture, looking ahead, sent out a call for an orange tree with a high resistance to salt. The plant hunters scoured the world, at first with no success. Then in the desert in the interior of Australia they found a small shrub that withstood salty water. It did not bear oranges, or look even remotely like a member of the citrus family; yet a thin section of its tissue under the microscope demonstrated its consanguinity, by showing floral structure typical of the orange group. Today this insignificant Australian desert shrub is being built up into the tree which may some day save the entire orange crop of California.

Sometimes luck as well as science aids the plant hunters. Java is one of the world's great centers of cane sugar. When a deadly mosaic disease (a virus) struck at the cane in Java (also in Louisiana), it looked as though the entire island would be beggared. Every possible type of cane from around the world was tried without success. When all hope had been abandoned, the scientists one day noticed some stunted plants that looked about halfway between cane and grass, growing in the corner of a field. More to pass the time than for any other reason, they tested this plant and found, first, that it was resistant to the blight and second, that with much difficulty, it could be crossed with the doomed full-sized cane in the fields. Today those few spears of cane-grass are the foundation of the whole vast industry of Java. What had happened was that the cane itself had accidentally cross-fertilized with a wild grass-like relative under a chance combination which might occur once in five hundred million times. It could never have been done by hand, for no scientist would have the time or the patience to keep on trying so long.

The new knowledge of today makes even more important a vast project of the United States Bureau of Plant Industry. The scientists of the Bureau have col-

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lected many thousands of dried specimens of all kinds of plants, useful or otherwise, in a huge herbarium. From these, under recently developed techniques, sections are cut for use on microscopic slides, and these are carefully cross-indexed, much as the fingerprint cards are in the FBI. Today, when the creation of hybrids is so much more important than in the past, the relationships proved to exist by the herbarium records have an importance not suspected when the collection was begun. In the past, we have usually looked abroad for new plants, and in the old days we were forced to do so. Today, however, this is not true; we can build up native North American species which have the initial advantage of thousands of years of adaptation to our soil, water and climate. Actually, of all the important commercial crops now in use in the United States, there are just five which, in their cultivated form, belong originally to the North American Continent—pecans, blueberries, cranberries, black walnuts and Concord grapes. Of the annual value of our crops, one-third is from plants imported from the Old World, and of the remainder, the overwhelming proportion is now from products of Central or South America. The Department is working to introduce native American strains into some of these exotic products. At the same time it is studying, in the light of the new scientific knowledge, the tropical fruits, vegetables and other plant life of Central and South America. One plant of which the scientists feel we are shockingly ignorant is the rubber tree. They see no reason why with hybridization, cross-fertilization, and perhaps a whiff of colchicine, we should not greatly improve this tree and perhaps extend the area where it thrives.

Remorselessly, the detectives of the laboratory are tracking down the secrets of the world about us. In all sorts of ways, they are fulfilling the promise of a better and more abundant life for mankind. In the light of their new skills and knowledge, of which the colchicine treatment is a conspicuous example, the sort of suicidal struggle in which Europe is now engaged seems more than ever pointless and archaic. It is hard to understand why men should destroy civilization in the effort to redistribute our present limited riches, when storehouses so much greater wait to be unlocked—if we only will.

BRUCE BLIVEN

This is the seventh of a series of articles under the general title, "The Men Who Make the Future." They are based on interviews with a number of leading research experts in the United States.—THE EDITORS

Notes on Human Nature

LET ME ASSEMBLE a few observations that might be called notes on human nature. Thus, for instance, Allston says:

One is a long time finding out how different others are from oneself, and what wildly improbable lives, from one's own point of view, can still be happy lives. I, who could be happy in a tub, or on St. Simeon's pillar, if certain other things were right with me, think all the other folks are queer. And I continue to think them queer and am only relieved to know that they like their queerness.

One of the queer things about other people, Allston seems to have thought, was that they did not share his interest in them. In connection with this he remarks:

Our age of psychology is not an age of interest in human nature. Think of the excited wonder with which the novels of Dickens and Balzac were written, a wonder that vibrates in their pages. This is the trait that also gives life to the great portraits of Ingres, Beechey and Gilbert Stuart, as of Velasquez and Rembrandt. No matter how good our novels and portraits may be, in every other respect, they lack this relish for character which has stamped all the enduring novels and portraits. Our novelists turn their characters inside out, and sometimes describe them inimitably, but can one imagine a writer of our time laughing and weeping over his characters, living their lives and sharing their feelings as Victor Hugo and Thackeray lived the lives of their men and women?

This excited wonder over human nature was one of the marks of the Victorian age, as of all the ages of energy. Is there a portrait-photographer living who has an eye for character comparable to David Octavius Hill's? Stieglitz has an eye for certain types, but he is more interested in other matters. The aim and the effect of most of our portrait-photographers is to make their sitters conform to a preconceived type—they all emerge from the camera as captains of industry or as pretty women, when they are not decorative arrangements. Well spoke Emerson, writing to Carlyle, about his "thirsty eyes," his "portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes." All the great novelists and portrait-painters, Carlyle and Taine among them, have "eaten" their characters in this way. As for modern painters—Derain, for example—most of them make their subjects look like dolls.

In no respect does it appear more clearly that ours is not an age of energy than in this indifference to character. The seventeenth century, like the nineteenth, was an age of energy. That is why Cromwell insisted that the artist who painted him should put in all the warts.

Psychology is one thing, and it is the dominant thing today. Perception and feeling are something else, and they are dominant in the great ages.

Allston had never lost his feeling for the Victorian age. He had always regarded it as one of the great ages. What age had produced more great characters? Was not its dominant element character? So he was

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amused by one of T. S. Eliot's statements, in "Essays Ancient and Modern." Eliot, speaking of Tennyson as a friend of Frederick Denison Maurice, said, "Nothing seems odder about that age than the respect which its eminent people felt for one another." Allston said, "I wonder why? Why 'odd'? The odd thing would have been if Tennyson had not respected Maurice. Nothing could have been odder, I should say, than that. Is it possible that Eliot does not know what respect means? If respect for character strikes him as odd, one can only think so." In general, Allston felt that modern people had lost all feeling for character, and this he attributed largely to the vogue of psychology. He said that psychology tended to destroy one's feeling for values: it turned one's attention to the causes of things, whereas the significance of things was what really mattered. Meanwhile, as one who was interested in biographical writing, he continued the theme of character in the following note:

The method of psychoanalysis, in the writing of biographies, has a very limited value, and I believe that, having once passed, it will not be used again. If one could accept for biography the dictum of George Brandes, that, while the romantic intellect is interested in the significance of things, the modern intellect is interested only in their causes, then one could say that the day of the Plutarchs has passed and that Freud is the master of the future. In reality, what concerns the biographer, whether "romantic" or not, is always the significance of things, while their causes are of relatively little importance. Psychoanalysis serves the psychologist in the biographer by placing him in possession of certain facts which he cannot obtain so easily by other methods. But these facts are no more useful than other facts, and all his facts are useless until the biographer has reconceived them in the light of his intuitive faculty, with its feeling for reality and proportion. This is a different mental organ from the intelligence, which actually paralyzes its operation. It is not the causes that matter in biography, it is the character itself, which belongs to the moral and esthetic sphere, a sphere that is quite apart from the sphere of causation. The attempt to turn biography into a science is as futile as it is with history.

So much for Allston's interest in character. That others did not share it always surprised him, and in fact their indifference disturbed him. He felt that it did not augur well for the future of the country. Thus he says:

What determines the value of a civilization? There is only one criterion, according to Leopardi—the amount of the singularity one finds among the people of the country. To put this in other words, character exists when people are interested in it and tolerate it. Character is the basis of civilization. Variety of character is the life of civilization.

There was a time when our population was full of singularity. In old New England, as in the South and West, the nobler types were commoner than they are at present, but also, and this is to be observed, the queer fellows, the odd fish, the cracker-barrel sages and the like—the village atheists, even the town drunkards—had a sort of privilege, as they had in Russia. They might have been considered reprobates, but they were encouraged as amusing, if not worthy of respect. People seemed to realize that some of these men were geniuses, *in posse* if not *in esse*. Toward all such persons, in recent times, the general attitude is one of impatience, and they have almost died out, along with the Shakers and other sects that once gave such variety to the human landscape. This indicates—to follow Leopardi—a definite retrogression in our civilization.

Regarding these sects, he continues:

The old Shaker house at Harvard village. Interested to observe the perfection of the MS. books copied by the brothers, as the monks copied MSS. in the Middle Ages. One was a New Testament, written in a round clear hand in a large folio volume. It was a rule of the community that if a copyist made a blot or an error he was obliged to discard the sheet and write it over again from the beginning.

The Shakers, and their American monastic life, devoted to weaving, carving, rug-making, etc. This is only one of the patterns of which we have lost sight in the general compulsion to make money in the shortest available fashion. People's imaginations have been so dulled by industrialism that they cannot respond to these patterns any longer. A century ago, the popular mind was filled with the Biblical patterns, the patterns presented by Plutarch, etc., so that all the classical modes of living were latent in people's minds and had only to be touched into action by some inspired leader. It was this preliminary work accomplished by popular custom that made possible the influence of Emerson, Garrison and Thoreau.

What strikes me among all the relics of our older time is the vivid reality of these life-patterns that have passed utterly out of men's minds.

I shall return to this subject later when I speak of modern writers, and it goes without saying that Allston rejoiced in every American singularity. "All the old sects have not gone," he says. "Remember Pennsylvania, and thank heaven for the Amish." He adds, "There are plenty of odd fish in the village where I live." Meanwhile, let me offer a few of his observations on persons:

The famous Dr. X, a gallant old man, cautiously gallant—he is now eighty-one. As he addressed me in his affable manner, his eye descended over my person, taking in the cut of my clothes, the quality of my handkerchief and necktie, even the polish on my shoes—twice, the while he maintained his well bred conversation, discreet in every gesture and every accent, but as if to reassure himself that I was "all right." So might George Ticknor have surveyed a stranger in Boston, ninety years ago.

Poor Mrs. Y flutters in, crying for help, as usual. She always reminds me of one of those little birds, astray on the ocean, that light on a passing steamer, preen their feathers and wildly dart about, and vanish again, most certainly to perish, unless some other ship happens along.

Our dear Z, who is both practical and deaf, spends an hour and a half good-naturedly shouting to procure the

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right direction for a road that only takes two hours at the worst. It would require less time to make every possible mistake, and one would be seeing new regions into the bargain. But practical people are also idealists. They enjoy the exercise of their practicality for its own sweet sake.

"Drunk as a lord." When my friend F. M. was traveling in the Balkans with Lord B., both as war correspondents, he noticed that Lord B. always said, "As drunk as a prince."

In London once, B. and I went to an Industrial Exhibition with an attaché of the Chinese embassy, the latter, with his drooping mustache, wearing the largest and roundest of spectacles and a bright red button in his cap. Said B., calling his attention to the X-ray machine, "You can see all the bones in the body." Our Chinese friend studied the photographs. "Ah," he replied, after a pause, tapping B.'s arm, "you can see all the bones, but you cannot see the heart." And this was all he could be induced to say about the Occidental magic of machinery.

I like Rudolph Ruzicka's story about his Boston friend who, when he comes to New York, and settles in the great New York hotel, opens his parcels and puts away in a drawer every scrap of wrapping-paper and every fragment of string—so they will not be "lonely" until he can take them back to Boston.

We are developing, in our circle, a Howells-James character in the person of Mrs. W., who has so many scruples and so many emotional problems, real to her, yet utterly fantastic, that she makes life a problem for everyone else. Of course, as with so many of Howells' people and James's people, these problems are unconscious attempts to fill a sadly empty life. They create the drama that human nature requires, for human nature abhors a vacuum as well as the other kind and insists upon creating drama out of nothing if it has nothing else to feed upon. American life is riddled with this furtive drama. I like people who speak their minds, and I think life ought to be thoroughly ventilated; but if the American mind had been ventilated, what would have become of Howells and James?

I add a note on a child:

John W., aged six, was getting off the ship with his mother when a man, standing beside him, offered him some chewing-gum. He shook his head slowly, "Oh, no," he said with his innocent air, "I don't know anything about chewing-gum."—"But perhaps your mother knows about chewing-gum?"—"Oh, no, I don't think my mother knows about chewing-gum." Then, after reflection, "But my father is so wise. He might know about chewing-gum."

By this time, the subject was exhausted, yet nobody's feelings were hurt.

All this was said with a seraphic air, yet as if suggesting depths of irony. How can one know what children feel? Sometimes their minds are as opalescent as the mind of an old French critic. This would have been the perfect answer, in tone, if not in substance, of a diplomat or a sage of seventy-five.

VAN WYCK BROOKS

This is the sixth article in the series, "Opinions of Oliver Allston." – THE EDITORS

A Catholic Writes to De Valera

The author of the following open letter is a distinguished American Catholic, professor of Philosophy at Notre Dame and recently president of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. – THE EDITORS

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

Free men call to other free men when both are threatened by a common menace. That is why I address you at this dark hour in human affairs. We share in common a great Christian faith and the blood of ancient Irish forebears. That gives me confidence that my appeal for English use of Irish naval bases will be recognized as wholly inspired by a passion for freedom and for the survival of all else that we both hold dear in cultural and religious values.

The present war is not merely for markets and territories. It is a struggle for the possession of the human soul. The civilized world is threatened by a sinister power which strikes directly at its moral foundations. Two philosophies of life are involved in deadly combat—the one based upon law, justice and human dignity, the other upon arbitrary will, violence and human slavery.

No one could ask the Irish people to relinquish the bases for the sake of England alone. As an American of Irish descent, I could make no such an appeal. Too long did the Irish suffer at the hands of England to make a plea of this kind either decent or effective. Stained in the memory of my father, a Kerry man, are the incidents of his youth spent on the River Shannon, when the English constabulary perpetrated their indignities upon a courageous but impotent people. The story of England's crimes against the Irish is only too familiar to me. In the Irish heart the cruelties of a Cromwell, the terrible era of the Penal Laws and the barbarities of the Black and Tans remain a vivid recollection. If we forgive, it is too much to ask that we forget.

But if I cannot appeal for England, I can appeal for the cause she represents. Her cause *today* is the cause of all humanity. Despite her past failings, England now stands in the front line of the common struggle of free men against one of the greatest menaces to civilization in recorded history. Her cause is the cause of the French, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Poles, the Danes, the Norwegians, the Czechs, and of the other

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nations that now lie prostrate under the heel of a ruthless foe. It is the cause likewise of America and of Eire. England may have awakened late to meet the challenge, but awaken she did. It may astonish us that it should be England today that resists the enemy of all religion and of all true culture. But England it *is*.

Nothing is dearer to the Irish heart than the religious faith it has cherished for centuries. It was this faith that sustained it during countless trials and tribulations. Your Excellency knows how the faith has suffered under the Nazis. The true aim of National Socialism is the complete destruction of Christianity, a "war of extermination," as Pope Pius XI called it.

The Catholic daily press in Germany has been destroyed. Priests have been confined in concentration camps. Parents have been intimidated for attempting to preserve the religious faith of their children. The Church's schools are being systematically uprooted. Nazi youth is deprived of religious instruction, and taught to breathe the air of conquest and revolution.

The Christian religion, we know, can never die, but it can suffer extinction in this or that part of the world. England now fights—it is surely one of the paradoxes of history—for the preservation of that faith. Wherever the flags of the Empire wave today, there the Church is at peace. It takes no great imagination to visualize what will be the fate of religion if the Nazi swastika is substituted for the standards of Britain.

Your Excellency is well aware of how my country has responded to the crisis. We are fashioning the weapons for the fight for freedom—the planes, tanks, ships and munitions. These goods must and shall be delivered to the points where the need is greatest and the outcome will be most decisive.

The waters of the north Atlantic are the danger zone. So long as England carries on, the rest of the world has hope. England's ability to carry on depends upon effective delivery of food and munitions. But the present rate of sinkings exceeds the tonnage now under construction in the combined yards of Britain and the United States. The ships now plying the hazardous lanes must be afforded better protection, or humanity throughout the world will enter a future that no free man cares to contemplate.

What do we ask of the Irish people? Merely the use of three naval bases—Cobh, Berehaven and Lough Swilly. The Treaty of 1921 reserved to England these ports. They were and are vital to her defense. In 1938, however, Prime Minister Chamberlain gave them back as a gesture of friendship, hoping that in any future hour of trial England would not be denied access to them.

In the First World War these bases played a paramount role in escorting ships. Their use enabled British naval units to strike out much farther into the Atlantic to meet incoming merchant vessels. Today, with long-range seaplanes and fast submarines operating from German bases in France, their importance may well be decisive. It would be tragic if the great Battle of the Atlantic were lost because their use had been denied.

Such a gift to humanity has its risks, of course. I understand the desire of Eire to remain neutral. Eire, like my own country, experiences a deep longing for peace and has a justifiable horror of war. All free peoples want peace today, but we know in our hearts that there is no peace. Tragically enough, it has been this universal quest for tranquility that the Nazi leader has exploited. He has been enabled to enslave states one by one, as their reluctant neighbors pitifully clung to the hope they would be spared. Never was a noble aspiration more thoroughly exploited for such fiendish ends.

You know how long Eire's freedom would last if Hitler conquered Britain. Ask the leaders of the small nations of the Continent how far a policy of strict neutrality—or even of conciliation—availed them before the greed and might of the Nazis.

Irish freedom, earned at so great a price, must not perish. The blood and tears that went into its formation must not have been shed in vain. The proudest act I ever performed as a youth was to make my small contribution to the purchase of an Irish Republican bond. We in America who had a part—however small—in the creation of the liberated and sovereign state of Eire cannot be silent while the forces of evil hover above and around it. There can be no peace for Eire until the cancer of Nazism has been eradicated.

Centuries ago Eire rolled back a tide of barbarism, as her scholars and saints spread over Europe instructing the ignorant in faith and sound philosophy. It was Eire that preserved the learning of the ancients when the rest of Europe was in darkness, and imparted the truths of divine and human wisdom to the hungry minds of England and continental Europe. Today a new tide of barbarism has arisen, far worse than the old. Again, it is Eire that can help to turn it back. It is unthinkable that she will fail humanity at this crisis.

FRANCIS E. MCMAHON

Dedication Set over a Crater

Underneath the paving-stones,
In a narrow refuge near the city drains,
My young wife in labor brought forth my daughter.

Bombs that screamed down from heaven
Were not portents of mystical favor on the birth,
Foretold no noble fortune for the babe.
She lived to cry, to draw breath underground,
To open eyes on darkness, and to hear death fall.

Persephone perhaps will weep to see
The mother's shade clasping that shadowy child—
But who will weep for me?

VALENTINE ACKLAND

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Washington Notes

The War Issue Sharpens

THE LINES at last are coming taut. The worst of the confusion seems to be past, giving way to honest fact-facing and understandable debate. A war party that is not afraid of being called a war party is taking shape around the Fight for Freedom Committee. A peace-at-any-price party that is no longer ashamed of its appeasement objectives is rallying to the standard of the America First Committee. The people who didn't know, yesterday's legions of uncertainty, are enlisting with one side or the other. The resulting situation is definitely an improvement over the muddy uncertainty of a few weeks ago.

Most of the increment of power seems to be coming to the war party. Organizers of the Fight for Freedom Committee made capital of the defeatism that followed the Greek and Jugosavian disasters. While congressmen and administration leaders were worrying about the state of the public mind, fearing that it had been unhinged by a too quick and shocking realization of the seriousness of Great Britain's plight, organizers of the committee went ahead with their membership campaign. They faced more boldly than any of their predecessors the implications of their program. In advocating convoys now, they conceded that convoys would draw fire and that shooting would mean war. They were ready for shooting and they were ready for war if full and effective use of the United States armed forces to aid Britain meant war. The response to their appeal was immediate and overwhelming.

Some day, when history is written, cognizance will have to be taken of the part played by Herbert Agar and Ulrich Bell of The Louisville Courier Journal and their employer, Barry Bingham, in the prologue to America's resistance to fascism. It was their audacious leadership of public opinion that made possible the President's ships-for-bases deal. It was they who showed that public opinion was not rotten but only ripe for plucking by a daring leadership when the Greek disaster brought Americans face to face with grim facts. Again, it was these men who had the vision to link their program of action in the Atlantic with assurances that they would also fight for maintenance of civil liberties and social gains at home.

Selection as honorary chairman of militant and reactionary old Senator Carter Glass, however disturbing it may have been to some, was an effective bid for coöperation on the right. There is beginning to be some evidence that the more enlightened business and industrial leaders have learned that fascism kills capitalism no less dead than communism and that a fascist world would not be a pleasant world for the enterpriser. Some of the old guard, like Glass himself, are finding that they hate fascists worse than they hate labor unions. At least they are willing to make common cause with their enemies of the early New Deal for the duration.

But the war party's best help has come from the opposition. Gradually, but more and more obviously, the America First Committee has fallen into the hands of its worst elements. The Christian Fronters, the anti-Semites, the Nazi sympathizers and miscellaneous hoodlums have packed its meetings. The Communists have bored in as usual. What started as a Middle Western isolationist group has become a catch-all for the totalitarian mobs. Former Colonel Lindbergh is cheered when he predicts the destruction of Britain by Hitler's fanatics. Any inadvertent reference to Jews is booed. In Chicago, America First managers have had to ban "God Bless America." They found that it invariably touched off a derisive demonstration because words and music were by Irving Berlin, a non-Aryan.

Senator Burton K. Wheeler, whose lack of restraint has got his causes into trouble before, is more emotional than usual this time. He recently came close to advocating insurrection in the armed forces to prevent convoying. Indeed, the peace movement is characterized by its violence and betrays alarming symptoms of incipient fascism. Some of the founders of America First are themselves deeply disturbed by the allies they have attracted.

Revulsion at the performance of the organized peacemakers doubtless has alienated many sincere and decent isolationists. This revulsion has made itself felt in Congress. The refusal of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to report out the Tobey anti-convoy resolution stirred up less resentment than this kind of pigeonholing operation ordinarily arouses. The resolution would be more badly licked today than it would have been a week ago.

There are still some uncertainties about labor's readiness for a fight. John L. Lewis, whose isolationism is made more determined by his hatred of Roosevelt, is still a power in the CIO and is out to reëstablish himself as its undisputed boss. While most union leaders do not follow his foreign-policy line, they are fearful of getting too far off it. The Communists are still with him, but increasingly strained relations between the USSR and Germany may draw them into the preparedness parade. The AFL is already in line.

President Roosevelt continues to move cautiously and still seems uncertain about the readiness of the American people to put up with shooting on the high seas. He feels his way, content for the moment, it seems, to find out how well his neutrality patrol will work—whether Hitler has any intention of calling its bluff.

Some of the interventionist columnists—even Walter Lippmann—have come close to being abusive in their criticism of the President for what they consider his failure to provide strong leadership. They hint that his indecision in the matter of convoys has brought on a slowing-down all along the defense line. There is much talk about the inefficiency of the army, some of it with sinister innuendo. There are rumors of scandal in defense industry.

There can be little doubt that the President, from his Chicago quarantine speech right to now, has been up with or well ahead of public opinion on foreign policy. There can be no doubt that his own resolve to throw American might on the scales against fascism is as strong as ever. If anyone qualifies by past performance as a judge of public opinion, it is he. If the Fight for Freedom Committee breaks a trail, as it seems to be doing, he will not be far behind. Columnists feel the urgency but not always the responsibility. The President must feel both.

Washington

T. R. B.

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Saroyan Directing, Note

This is only a note on Mr. Saroyan's directing to follow my last week's observations on his play. I have tried an article of some length about the directing in "The Beautiful People," but can't seem to make it come out; perhaps the points could be made only at the performance itself, watching the scenes as they go along. Nevertheless, we should have a note if for nothing else than to say that, in my opinion at least, not enough has been written in its favor, or in the explanation of this directing, and certainly too much has been proclaimed against it.

Whatever may be thought about the playwright's work as director here, one thing should be said, and that is that we make a mistake if we view it as amateur fumbling or non-professional innocence. Obviously a man astute enough to create some of the writing, dramatic and otherwise, that Mr. Saroyan has achieved is not a babe in arms when he makes a decision about directing his play. And more than likely he has had success enough in the theatre to assure him backers, producers, directors, and so on galore. He must have had some reason outside of sheer egotism, or of a mania for seeming self-sufficient, that kept him from putting his play into Broadway hands, with the securities implied there, the knowledge of how to play the game, the treasuries or the wheezy old loads of stagecraft, as the case may be. It is possible of course that he will always be an amateur in the admirable sense of the word—in essence one who follows an art for the dear love of it—and that he is made sick at the stomach by the expert Broadway doctoring, the search for the surefire and for the smear and shine of the banal and common average, or that he hates the professional hand *per se*, even when it is distinguished and helpful. However that may be, he took a chance when he assumed every side of the production of his play, the money, directing, casting and all. But taking a chance is almost as professional to Mr. Saroyan's talents as the problem is profession to a problem play, or sex to a bull.

It would have to be true, I suppose, and has been always so, that people who are not artists are apt to see that a thing is art only when it is like the art they have seen. We often hear an artist reproached, admonished or advised by people ready to explain to him things that if they know he, obviously, would know also, and if he did not, could ask anyone anywhere within speaking distance. For that matter our education too can take that comfortable line. For example, in high school I was given to understand that nobody in Egypt seemed to have noticed that in a profile view of a man's head the eye is not the same shape as from the front—the ancient Egyptians were that quaint. And as for the Chinese—

When Mr. Robert Edmond Jones did his "Macbeth" twenty-odd years ago, there were plenty to tell him of his errors—some there were who went out of their way to explain to him that the scenery needed a wall at the back, et cetera, some to even greater details of elucidation and admonition, as if they were sharing with another some unique experience or as if they were retailing a view, some prospect of houses and vistas, field, sky and barns, to a blind man. Apparently we were to conclude that the designer was either without eyes or without the right powers of memory. And meanwhile that design of his for a production of "Macbeth" was far ahead of its time then, and is even farther ahead of the time now. In fact, it would have been a landmark in our theatre but for the fact that the theatre has gone backward instead of forward and on from it. Nevertheless there was a great majority of audience and spectators to check up on him what was wrong and to regale him with his failures in resemblance to nature, in stage practice and even in the habits of scene-painters.

The inclination behind this impulse to check and to inform is doubtless natural and is useful and healthy for all concerned, including the artist. It can on the other hand also be discouraging, impeding, deadening. The best that can be got from it is that it can press a work of art to run the gauntlet of reference to the traditional, the conventional, the familiar, the natural or actual or what not; and may influence it to purge and energize itself within its own nature, to unify its intense and peculiar character, and to discover the high brilliance of the form inevitable to that character.

I should mention that I myself have directed more than one play on Broadway and have seen many rehearsals otherwise; so that I have some practical knowledge of the business of directing, the methods and problems and evidences of it. A few passages in "The Beautiful People" drag a little, and we might be told that they could be speeded up by means of different directing. That might be, but we should have different scenes resulting. This is the line of comment from the general run of theatre professionals: they would tell Mr. Saroyan where to head for technically, what to do to put the effects over. What they will never see is that, put over thus, the effect becomes another thing.

Some of these professional suggestions, devices, methods and so on, when well used, bring about admirable results of course, fine economies, crystallizations and projections of the dramatic matter. In mediocre pieces—sheer theatre, as the French use the term, as distinguished from drama, art, etc.—this sort of stage handling serves to pull the whole thing together and to stamp it out with the right competence. On the other hand, all that the average of such suggestions and approach would do for a play like "The Beautiful People" would be merely to snap it up, and to stereotype, clip and canalize it, and to scatter through it old husks, some of them more or less effective still, but husks all the same. One of the things Mr. Saroyan might say when asked why he did not do thus and so, is that he had time, or took time, not to do it. I have from watching the scenes the impression of endless pains, patient indulgence and love spent on rehearsing them.

A characteristic reaction from some laymen would be that they had not thought much at all about the matter of reacting. This connects with the fact that such laymen —often experienced theatre-goers—make no distinction between the script and what they see on the stage. It would be useful to such as these to read the text, the mere words, of the first-act scene where the spinster comes to see again her old romance, and sits in the rocking chair, knitting, she and the young son talking, like flowers touching their heads together, casual, gentle and wild, two actors coached into this effect of simple and personal vivid life and crystal air. And after that to go and watch the scene again.

STARK YOUNG

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Chain-Store Daisy

"THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES" is a picture that provides a nice evening of entertainment for a number of good reasons, and then for some mysterious but bad reasons blows up in its own face. I don't get it. Its story has to do with the labor situation in a department store, and the general feeling among Hollywood producers is that monkeying around with labor even enough to spell the word out is like throwing rocks at a stranded mine. But they had started on the subject, and for the particular case had treated it well enough if innocuously; the line of the story was clear and all in order. Yet at the end, for which everybody is waiting and in which an honorable resolution of difficulties could have been very easily achieved without barricades, the whole tone and treatment change and the story does a sudden shuffle-off in blackface.

Frank Ross and Norman Krasna (also the screenplay writer) produced it as a vehicle for Jean Arthur (Mrs. Frank Ross); Sam Wood directed and the support includes Charles Coburn, Edmund Gwenn and Spring Byington as veterans, Robert Cummings as a young live-wire who occasionally short-circuits. The owner of a department store gets the idea of checking up on the employees who have been organizing a union, and is able to get himself taken on as a salesman in slippers. Of course he immediately gets interested in the young people of the shoe department, who befriend him, and particularly interested in the floorwalker, the manager, etc., who give him the usual booting around. He still can't see the young organizer, Jean Arthur's boy friend, but give him time. There is a Coney Island party at which he learns a bit, and when he loses his locker key and is picked up as a suspicious character in a bathing suit, he learns the Bill of Rights can be a helpful thing to have around. Thrown in with this is his loss of a very expensive dyspepsia through the simple life (this is known as a piece of the roof) and his crusty bachelor's yen for one of the salesladies. No harm done.

Up to now it has made sense and fun too, quite a mature job of working an idea into lines and action, working out the different angles so that the whole is a story. You will not expect a sobersides analysis of trade unionism in a comedy, but you do not ordinarily expect the little highlights of sympathetic treatment along this way, the firings, the Macy plan of lay-off, the fear of company spies, the young organizer with his losing minority. The stuff is treated lightly but in a kindly way, and since it was written with movie intelligence and directed with taste, there is quite a pleasant time.

I think where it first begins to go writer-wild is in having the young fellow go off from the beach in a mixture of despair and huff (he has been a pretty juvenile sort of organizer anyway, not to say unaffiliated), for the story continues with its good touches for a while, but the end is gathering. There is a finely devised scene where Jean Arthur, getting off the subway with the doors closing behind, suddenly knows what the card meant that she has read and thrown away in her distraction; there are a few high moments in the store. Then everything begins to jerk and clank around like Stuff and Guff on a Saturday-night laughing jag, everybody except the people you really hope to see licked arrives at a burlesque directors' meeting, there is some comic-strip foolishness and the happy ending is rushed in before it has had time to dress.

Jean Arthur has done a really first-rate job with a part made for her; she can be at once astringent and appealing, brash, tender and gay. Charles Coburn always seems as though the part were made for him, as though he were there and not even thinking of acting—which of course demands the best and only true thinking about acting. Yet in that last riptide of risibles everyone bobs around with the identity and meaning of a cork, and is lost in the confusion. I still don't get it, but would suggest that it is dangerous business to tamper with burning subjects when you do not burn about them, and when the subject of Labor in particular still afflicts the most orgulous interests with what we might call the Hollywood hop.

I shall be very late to class with a report on "Citizen Kane." For one thing, the film is opening in Los Angeles several days after it has opened in New York and other key cities, as that is the way they do things out here. For another, I missed the West Coast press showing by not getting out here in time, and the New York previews by getting away too early. And then another of the peculiar things that have been happening to this opus took place: RKO (the reluctant distributor) and/or the Welles outfit, who had been showing the picture like mad and hired a whole theatre for the trade preview, suddenly locked it away in bond, and for the last month even its own mother couldn't see it. Variety gave as a reason that the studio found, to its dismay, the picture being run off in projection rooms before just the film-colony people it hoped to nick for the high prices of the initial two-a-day run. RKO just says unbreakable contractual agreements, being both vague and very nice about it.

"Citizen Kane" is an advance-curiosity picture, not by accident. When Orson Welles needs a press agent, that is something; and when W. R. Hearst throws all his formidable power into annihilating a work or person, that is something too, and probably means it (or he) will be an inevitable and sweeping success. Add to that the facts of Welles's being already a combination boy wonder and one-man-band; of the straw-man battle's being joined as between Welles of the theatre art and the jealous moguls of the movie; of lullabys for laymen about technical innovations, canons defied and barriers burned away. Finally it becomes sight unseen the kind of picture most eagerly awaited by those who at no other time show the slightest interest in the art of films. Sink or swim, it is assured more cultural memorability in advance of showing than anything since Eisenstein's mighty fizzle in Old Mexico.

How good a film "Citizen Kane" is in terms of telling a story and carrying its mood with lights and the delicate electric camera will depend on how good a film it is, in the end if not the beginning. Out here, the good directors, writers and cameramen—which is to say the men who know most about the movie art, having worked up through and with it an average of fifteen to twenty years—anticipate it with interest, perhaps an occasional twinkle of amusement, and no rancor. That's about the way it looks, still locked away in the cans, but perhaps this time you hadn't better wait for baby.

OTIS FERGUSON

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A Communication

Fritz von Unruh

Fritz von Unruh is now living, The New Republic learns, on Riverside Drive, New York City, where he is writing a novel and a play. It is a striking coincidence that Professor Steinhauer's letter should have been received by The New Republic on the eve of the first dinner of the European PEN in America. This organization of literary men and women has been forced to abandon its headquarters in one European country after another as these have come under Hitler's control. At the first American dinner Jules Romains, Sigrid Undset, Stefan Zweig and W. Somerset Maugham will speak to Europe by short wave in their native tongues. — THE EDITORS

SIR: It is one of life's lesser ironies that literary America should have to learn of Fritz von Unruh's presence in the United States from a resident of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. But it is more than mere irony that, while so many German exiles have been welcomed and rehabilitated by the generous American people, Fritz von Unruh, perhaps the most distinguished figure in German letters during the republican era, was nearly refused admittance to your country and is now living in total obscurity in New York.

When I speak of Unruh as the most distinguished figure in German letters during the republican era, I am not thinking primarily in literary terms, although those who know recent German literature place him in the very front rank of contemporary writers and agree that he is one of the few genuine poets of his generation. "Unruh," writes Thomas Mann, "is without doubt one of the most gifted dramatists Germany has produced in the last decades and one of the most successful and famous as well. His lyric poems belong to the very best in modern German literature." And he has had his just measure of recognition in the past, both in Germany and abroad. He was awarded the coveted Kleist and Schiller prizes; his plays exerted a powerful influence on the younger Germany of twenty-five years ago; and his works have been translated into many languages.

But my principal concern now is with Unruh the man. I believe it is important to recall to public memory the heroic career of this extraordinary personality.

Fritz von Unruh is descended from a family which for centuries has belonged to the Silesian and Prussian landed aristocracy. His father, a lifelong friend of Hindenburg, was a general in the German army and the governor of the province of East Prussia. Like all his brothers, Unruh was destined for a military career, which began at the age of eight. He served in turn as a cadet, imperial page, lieutenant of the Guard and adjutant to one of the sons of the former Kaiser. But the atmosphere and empty routine of the Prussian barracks were extremely irksome to the sensitive, cultivated mind of this poet. In 1912 Unruh resigned his commission and retired into private life, to devote himself exclusively to literature, in which he had already scored a conspicuous success with his play "Offiziere."

His experiences in the First World War merely strengthened his opposition to Prussian ideals. He had reëntered military service and fought bravely in France. Twice he was awarded the Iron Cross; once in October, 1914, and two years later at Verdun. But all this time his spiritual rebirth was progressing. In 1916 the new Unruh finally emerged in his famous war diary "Opfergang" ("The Way of Sacrifice"), which was banned by the German General Staff because of its "unpatriotic" sentiments.

With the founding of the German Republic, he rapidly became an outstanding figure in literature and public life. He was one of the co-founders of the Republican Party, which he represented in the Reichstag. His famous Reichstag speech after the murder of his friend Walter Rathenau will remain one of the historical documents of the age. He used his influence on behalf of political offenders who were sentenced to death by reactionary judges. He was one of the founders of the last bulwark against Hitlerism, the Iron Front; it was Unruh who delivered the principal address in the Berlin Sportpalast before an audience of 35,000 people who had assembled there in a final effort to stem the growing tide of reaction. Repeatedly Unruh had warned German youth against the spirit of revenge which the Nazis and old-style reactionaries had aroused in the masses since the birth of the Republic.

When the Nazis seized power, Unruh left Germany and began a life of voluntary exile. He was not compelled to live abroad; for the Nazis, realizing his propaganda value for their cause, invited him to return and offered to publicize him as "the modern Schiller." But Unruh had not left Germany to escape the wrath of Hitler's men; he had emigrated in order to continue his fight against Nazism and to work for his ideal of a United Europe. When the Nazis saw that he was not to be bought, they deprived him of his German citizenship and ordered his writings to be burned.

In the autumn of 1939, when war broke out, Unruh was living in the south of France, working on a novel of contemporary life, and contributing to the anti-Nazi press. During the fifth-column scare in France, he was thrown into a concentration camp along with other prominent German refugees. In June, 1940, after the French collapse, Unruh managed to escape from his prison with the help of French friends. He and his wife slipped through the meshes of the Gestapo and made their way to Portugal via Spain, and from there to the United States.

Now Unruh is living in New York, apparently unknown to those generous Americans who are helping the victims of Nazi Germany to begin life anew on this continent. "My life during the past year," he wrote to me recently, "has been a unique martyrdom." The conviction that this martyrdom must not continue any longer has moved me to write this brief notice about him. Without wishing to make invidious comparisons, I must nevertheless point out that, while many of our German exiles left the Third Reich only because they were deprived of their livelihood, Unruh left as a matter of sacred principle, as a living protest against the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. They became opponents of Nazism after 1933; Unruh denounced it from its very birth. Their martyrdom is for the most part involuntary and at best pitiful; his is heroic and tragic.

H. STEINHAUER
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada

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The Bandwagon

Charles Francis Adams, former Secretary of the Navy, told members of the Boston Yacht Club at their seventy-fifth anniversary at the Copley-Plaza last night that if "Hitler had gone on a yachting trip, he would have developed a spirit of kindness and all these troubles might not have been with us." – *From The Boston Herald.*

Although maintained solely by legitimate business, Better Business Bureaus operate primarily in the public interest. – *Advertisement of the Chicago Better Business Bureau in The Downtown Shopping News, Chicago.*

Yes, I saw everything that was wrong about the British expeditionary force [to Norway] but from it I gained the conviction that the British would win this war. No country except one as great as the British Empire could afford to send a force so unfit to fight—no other country could afford to make so big a "flop." – *Mrs. Barbro Alving, a Swedish journalist, interviewed in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Choppers at One Remove

Fifty-eight residents of the county home asked the Mecklenburg County commissioners to furnish them with false teeth, but the board replied that the cost would be prohibitive. Instead, permission was granted for the purchase of a second-hand meat slicer for the home. – *AP dispatch from Charlotte, N. C., in The Vancouver, B. C., Daily Province.*

Who's Looney Now?

Last night, just after three bombs had fallen together in our district, a man went mad in the street. He seemed to be the only person in the open air that night. People silent, alert in basements and shelters, heard him rave and scream about the square cursing Churchill, cursing the government with every kind of obscenity, in a voice that echoed and carried for yards around. It was as if madness had stricken him with an overwhelming clarity of political vision. – *From an article in The New Masses.*

File-and-Forget Department

The German Propaganda Minister, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, in an interview with John Cudahy, former American Ambassador to Belgium, gave assurance that there would be no invasion of America, because the German General Staff had considered the problem and had found it impracticable. – *From the news summary, "The International Situation," in The New York Times.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Can America Be Invaded?

[Mr. John T. Flynn in a recent magazine article said that "It is a significant fact that there is no military authority in this country who believes that an invasion of America by Germany —with or without the British fleet—is possible." The editors of The New Republic have never believed that actual physical invasion by a German expeditionary force was the most important aspect of the problem facing this country. Since, however, Mr. Flynn's statement seemed rather sweeping, we wrote to a group of military experts and asked them to comment. Quotations from those who have replied appear below. – THE EDITORS]

SIR: It is my view that the question of invading America is being set up as a straw man by those who oppose any plan for a bold and forthright foreign and military policy for the United States. They endeavor to make it appear that just so long as the United States can be said to be secure against actual invasion by the German armies, there is nothing else—nothing worse—that we have to fear from a German victory. This seems to me to be a wholly distorted point of view, and I am happy to have an opportunity of expressing my opinion on this subject.

New York City GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

SIR: Mr. Flynn's is one of those apparently profound, actually utterly meaningless, statements that can be used to justify inaction under any circumstances. As a fact it requires amendment; the insertion of the word "immediate" between "an" and "invasion." But even granted that the fact was absolutely and not conditionally true, what is its significance?

Some approximation can be arrived at by modifying the statement to fit the more ordinary affairs of life, *viz.*:

"It is a significant fact that there is no police authority in this country who believes that the hold-up of the First National Bank is possible."

"It is a significant fact that there is no geological authority in this country who believes that an earthquake which would destroy the city of San Francisco is possible."

"It is a significant fact that there is no meteorological authority in this country who believes that a flood which could engulf the city of Louisville is possible."

To arrive at the significance of these facts it is only necessary to date the first back to the day before Dillinger descended on the bank in question; the second to 1905, and the third to January, 1938. The first and third statements were actually made in print as of those dates. It seems only necessary to add that it is a significant fact that success in war is achieved only by accomplishing the apparently impossible—like breaking the Maginot Line.

New York City FLETCHER PRATT

SIR: Mr. Flynn's statement is so sweeping that it is impossible either to contradict or to confirm. If he had said ". . . that invasion of America by Germany—with or without the British fleet—is forever and ever impossible," I should contradict him. If he had said that it is not feasible within the very near future, I should say that he was probably right. Another question is, of course, whether an invasion could be successful—there is such a tremendous difference between "possible" and "successful." Again, what does he mean by "an invasion of America"? The United States and its continental domain? The Western Hemisphere, including Greenland? You see, there are at least four or five big problems; and I could not in all conscience be so sweeping on any of these propositions as Mr. Flynn is on his own.

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Another question that might be raised is: Have the Germans any idea of coming? Fantastic as it may sound, they have had such a notion in times gone by. For proof of this, I may refer you to an article of mine in The Political Science Quarterly of December, 1939, and March, 1940, which was written well before the outbreak of the present war.

ALFRED VAGTS

The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J.

SIR: My comment on Mr. Flynn's statement is this:

1. I suggest that nobody who considers any military operation as "impossible" on mere geographic grounds should be designated a military authority. Military history is full of successful operations previously held "impossible." You need not go back to Hannibal's crossing of the Alps, or to Napoleon, who said that military genius consists of finding no or few impossibilities. I remind you only of the various operations which before or at the beginning of the present war were regarded as "impossible." The Ardennes Forest is really very inaccessible terrain; can we suppose that oceans, the most important highways of mankind, are likewise inaccessible?

2. I suggest further that the impossibility of an operation cannot be deduced from the present technical limitations of weapons. You will remember that the limited capacity of planes was considered a reason why troops could not be transported in quantities, and you will remember also to what terrible surprises this theory has led some of the "military authorities." Much depends on the skill with which available weapons are used. Do you think that the present range of bombers is an eternal one?

3. I agree with Mr. Flynn that an invasion of the Americas against the British fleet (he should have added: against the British Empire bases) is not very likely. But suppose that the African bases of Dakar and Capetown, as well as some of the islands in the South Atlantic, fell into German hands. A German fleet in this case would be stationed much nearer the Argentine than the United States fleet would be, even if it were at Trinidad. An invasion of southern South America could thus succeed even without German naval superiority.

4. Since Germany would be able to conquer bases in South America, why should she not be able to attack northern South America? The United States could dislodge the Germans in South America only if its navy regained control of the Atlantic (which would necessitate the acquisition of strong naval bases and of hinterland south of Rio de Janeiro), and destroyed the German fleet. But suppose America lost the decisive sea battle.

5. South America is for the United States what Belgium and the Netherlands were for France, and an attack against it would be in the best German tradition of flanking strategy. However, South America is not the only approach. Northeastern Canada and Alaska are important flanks as well. Of course the United States has taken over Greenland. But is it so easy to defend that island—particularly if Germany has Iceland and Norway? Moreover, if Germany had a clear-cut naval superiority, the defense of the north Atlantic might be as difficult as the defense of the south Atlantic. And if Germany controls the whole European continent, with its immense industrial capacities, will she not be able to surpass American production of warships?

6. It is evident, however, that to invade efficiently Germany must also win air superiority. But what is true for European ship-building capacity is equally true for airplane factories. If she has the mastery of the seas, she will be able to bring over to the American continent a great portion of her air fleet.

7. We must not forget that the long coastlines of this hemisphere are an asset to the aggressor, and that the aggressor has the initiative. This might enable him to trick American naval and air defenses, especially if he attacked simultaneously from the north and south, or if he was supported by another aggressor attacking Alaska and the Pacific Coast farther south.

8. Must we not also take the non-military means of invasion into account? A victorious Germany will be the economic master of the world, and particularly of southern South America. Therefore it will be possible for her to gain political footholds on this hemisphere without any previous military action. Moreover, it will be possible to intensify a sort of psychological war within the United States by creating or aggravating economic crises caused by the establishment of the "New Order." Whether they will succeed in disrupting this country internally is, of course, highly questionable, but the Nazis would have reached their goal if domestic quarrels should cause general inertia in foreign policy and in military affairs, as was the case in France before 1939.

STEFAN T. POSSONY

The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J.

SIR: It may be interesting to know what the *German* military experts think about this matter. Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte, the theoretic organ of the Nazi Party, wrote in November, 1940:

> The United States feels secure against any surprise attack behind its ocean barriers. It places its trust in its sea power, which it considers capable of repelling any enemy in home waters. But the picture changes at once when the Mexican borders become the front. The protection of the oceans would vanish—at least with respect to air attack. Even more critical would become the position of the Panama Canal. . . . A hostile Latin America would at once lower the value of traditional communications measures. In the Atlantic as well as the Pacific, the role of South America will necessarily become crucial when equal enemies ultimately face each other. With respect to Africa as well as to the great strategic line from Japan to North America by way of Hawaii, South America with its belt of islands constitutes a powerful flanking position. Even if South America did not have naval forces of its own at its disposal, its importance as a land base for naval and air forces would remain. (Quoted in my book, "The Battle for the World: Strategy and Diplomacy of the Second World War," pp. 370-1.)

These are the plans, the means and the method of the German aggression against the United States, bluntly exposed in this leading German review whose founder and publisher was a certain private person—Adolf Hitler.

New York City MAX WERNER

From The New Republic Mail Bag

A friend sends a clipping from The Los Angeles Times for April 18. "All textbooks not geared to constructive attitudes and specific learning have been withdrawn from the city school system during the past five weeks," The Times begins, adding that this became known when union teacher groups protested the banning of Dr. Harold Rugg's books. A school official is quoted as saying that "The defense program demands the production of attitudes and products which are constructive and fundamental to democratic life today." Our friend, somewhat less euphemistically, writes in the margin: "Looks as if the chamber of commerce and the NAM had taken over our schools."

A. V. Lasky of Brooklyn wants us to print "from the pen of some respected military authority a description of some of the possible means by which Hitler will invade America." See correspondence above.

The Workers' Defense League is sponsoring a dinner-forum at 7 o'clock on May 9 in New York's Town Hall Club in honor of Senator La Follette. . . . The Citizens' Committee for Government Art Projects, 347 Fifth Avenue, New York City, asks that friends of American art rally to see that Congress restores cuts in the WPA appropriation, which endanger the art projects.

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Books in Review

Impersonal History

THERE ARE two stories in Louis Fischer's big autobiography, "Men and Politics."[1] The first, told at length, is the story of a political figure, an American correspondent who lived for fifteen years in Moscow, who wrote the standard book on Russian foreign relations, who contributed to The Nation in New York and other liberal journals throughout the world, giving them articles that had the ring of authority, who played an important part in the Spanish civil war, who wrote and preached against appeasement, who finally became so identified with international politics that in his autobiography he talks of almost nothing but political events—Madrid and Munich, the Moscow purges, the fall of France. Instead of being a personal narrative, his book is chiefly a diplomatic history of the long armistice and of the mistakes that led to another war.

One's chief complaint against this story is that much of it has already been told by other correspondents, some of whom have written with political acumen and deep passion—Gedye, Sheean and E. A. Mowrer, to mention only three. What Fischer contributes is greater comprehensiveness and a more detailed analysis of certain episodes, including Stalin's dictatorship and the war in Spain. He also gives us many items of information that he kept for a long time in his personal files: for example, the reasons for Adolf Joffe's suicide, the tale of the yacht that escaped to Mexico with a cargo of pearls and diamonds, and some damaging testimony about Ambassador Bullitt as an appeaser. His book seems to have little human color or self-revelation. Possibly from living so long among the Bolsheviks, Fischer has acquired the habit of being purely external in his writing, even when he wants to talk about himself. His "I's" have to do with what I saw in Moscow or Paris, what I was told by Negrín (and what I answered); they are almost never the "I's" of what I felt, how I loved, why and how deeply I was mistaken.

But there is another story in the book, a personal narrative with broader implications, that is told briefly and often by indirection. It is the story of a young American who went to Russia four years after the war and found another world. It is the story of how he lost that world, by stages, through no fault of his own, and how he found nothing to take its place.

Moscow in 1922 was starving and dressed in rags, but it seemed to be the capital of a glorious future, and Fischer became a citizen of the future. Not a Russian citizen: there is a distinction that he was careful to preserve. He insists time and again that he never had any official connection with the Russian government; he never joined the Communist Party; he retained at all times and often exercised his freedom to be critical of the Russian leaders. Still, his ideals were very close to theirs and they trusted him; often they gave him information that was not released to "the bourgeois press." This relationship grew even closer in the period after 1929, when Fischer shared in the dream that obsessed all Russia, the dream of completely changing the country within five years, of producing more and more of everything. But the dream began to fade in 1935, and by the following year, Fischer says, "Things were happening which made me sick and kept my fingers out of the typewriter."

Those "things" were of course the growth of political repression and the first foreshadowing of the purges. They involved Fischer in a conflict of loyalties. Should he continue to praise Russia as many others were doing, while hoping that affairs would right themselves? Should he attack Stalin and thereby exile himself from the world in which he had been living? He decided to do neither: he would wait for further developments and meanwhile report the Spanish war.

In Spain, he did a great deal for the Loyalists. He was the first American to enlist in the International Brigades, of which he served for a time as quartermaster. He became the close friend and confidant of several Spanish leaders. Not only was he able to help them through his connections in Russia, but he also acted for them as a sort of unofficial envoy, explaining their aims in the United States and carrying messages to French and British statesmen. And Spain paid her debt to him, though not in money. Fischer says of himself, "I have all my life been devoted to one cause or another. I cannot imagine life without something higher than myself in which I can have faith." Spain gave him back the faith he had lost in Russia.

His visits to Moscow in 1937 and 1938 were like visits to the death-house. Nobody came to see him for fear of the GPU; people had been arrested for talking with foreigners. When he asked his Russian wife, "How is So-and-So?" he would learn that So-and-So had disappeared. X and Y had been shot; X's wife was in exile. Antique and second-hand shops were full of household belongings which the families of purged men had sold when they lost their homes. Day after day, Fischer sat alone on the balcony of his apartment taking sunbaths. Day after day, he watched an important Soviet official sitting alone on another balcony, waiting for the GPU to come and arrest him. "He waited three weeks while the GPU watched and his wife wasted away. Then the GPU came."

Yet Fischer went back to Spain without breaking his silence about the trials. "I had invested fourteen years of hope in Soviet Russia. The present black phase was about a year old. I would wait." Besides, he explains, Russia was almost the only country helping Spain or following a foreign policy that was calculated to prevent the outbreak of another war. If Fischer attacked Stalin, he would be helping to weaken the Russian efforts for peace. Many of his Spanish friends would begin to suspect him. "I was losing Russia," he says. "I did not want at the same time to lose Spain."

[1] Men and Politics: An Autobiography, by Louis Fischer. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 678 pages. $3.50.

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But all these calculations soon proved useless. In the series of swift disasters that began at Munich, he lost not only Russia and Spain but the whole world in which he had spent his manhood and had become a figure of importance. The only personal recompense was his final release from a false situation; at last he could tell everything that he had been holding back. But even this reward was limited, considering that by learning too much about the underside of European politics he had partly lost the power of wholehearted belief and forthright indignation. Facts? He had them by the thousands, he had been jotting them down for years. It is rather the destruction of faith and hope that keeps his book from being as unified and moving as we might have expected.

All this is the second story that Louis Fischer partly tells and partly suggests. It is not a political history but a moral drama based on politics and having political implications. It is the story of the author as an individual, but it is also the collective tragedy of a whole order or type in Western civilization, composed of the men whose profession was handling ideas and whose aim as a group was to mold the future through good will and intelligence. In Russia, many of them were purged and the others became cynics. In the West, their moral position was weakened by the Russo-German pact, while their social position in the whole continent of Europe was destroyed by the German invasions. Wherever they are living today, even in their own homes they are exiles. The country for which they actually fought and from which they were driven was the future.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Poetry: What Direction?

Five Young American Poets. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions. 221 pages. $2.50.
Special Laughter, by Howard Nutt. Prairie City, Illinois: The Press of James A. Decker. 59 pages. $1.

THE APPROACH TO POETRY is not and cannot be intellectual: no amount of taking thought will do the would-be poet an atom of good: he may be both witty and wise and still not a poet. Love is not of the intellect, the birds do not, as far as one can tell, mate intellectually, nor does one admire the blossoming of the rose or peony primarily for its wit. Death, too, is a subject for jest, or can be, but not in poetry. For, like death or love or mating—or the feelings these arouse in us—poetry is an elemental: the feelings come first, the rationalization comes afterward. The poet may, and should, *think*—certainly. The richer his awareness, whether of the so-called outer world, which his sensorium reports to him, or of that other and no less objective world which he can intermittently observe within himself, and the subtler his understanding of the inviolable twinnedness of these two worlds, the richer and deeper of course will be his poetry—this sort of understanding will give it continuity and toughness of texture. But the thinking, the awareness, cannot produce the feeling—one cannot *think* a feeling into existence, least of all into poetic existence. The awareness must rather wait on the feeling, ready at once to accompany and enrich it, that is all.

To reflect on these things, obvious and simple as they are, is to be reminded again, as one should be now and then, of the reasons for being modest about poetry. Few know what poetry is. No one—no poet, even—has as yet found a satisfactory definition of it, or one with which many others would agree. Could we perhaps say that it is love? or worship? Not a mere *celebration* of love (a far more limited thing), but the very act of loving, the profoundest sort of acceptance. And the greater the love and the wider its range, the greater the poet. It is something like that, without any doubt; and therefore something inestimably precious, perhaps the most precious of all things; and therefore again something about which we should remember, gratefully, to be humble. Many are the thyrsus-bearers, few are the mystics; but in our zeal for perfection let us not forget that even the fraud and the tyro are servants of the oldest of the mysteries. We can afford to praise the *desire* in them, even if we cannot praise the poetry: we can praise poetry *for* them, even if we cannot accept them as poets. If we find them at fault, are we not ourselves fallible? And how can we know which one of us comprehends—*i. e.*, surrounds—the other? And if it is a question of a choice of directions, or fashions, in such a bewildering variety, who can be sure that east is better than west, or forward better than backward?

The question of direction is always and naturally of tremendous concern to young poets: that business of *onwardness* is pretty exciting. And in the end the joke is always on the young poet, of course, even if he never knows it: after twenty centuries it turns out that all directions in poetry are inescapably the same; they all come to one thing; they all are *inward*. Aeschylus and Dante, Sophocles and Shakespeare, Lucretius and Rilke—these can talk intelligibly to one another across the ages, their language a divine simplicity, their concern what is universal in human experience, a sort of immortal norm. Were they much worried about directions? One doubts it. And that is precisely the trouble with much contemporary poetry, one is inclined to think: the poets are too self-conscious, their approach to poetry is too intellectual and premeditated, they are too articulate and theoretical *about* poetry. Mr. Laughlin's "Five Young American Poets," for example—Miss Barnard, Mr. Moses, Mr. Jarrell, Mr. Berryman and Mr. O'Donnell—try to tell us, in a series of prose credos, what they mean by poetry; they are very self-possessed about it, very prepared; and just the same, in every one of these excellent credos, one ends by feeling that the concern with poetry simply is not *deep* enough. The reasons, the preoccupations, are local, private, technical, temporary, fashionable—in short, they tend to be superficial; and perhaps it is not surprising therefore to find that the poetry itself tends to be both songless and journalistic, with a note as of a suburban gossip column. The ingenuities and intelligence are too evident, the preciosities too violent, and alas the sense of humor almost nil. It is poetry pulling itself up by the bootstraps. There are very good things, notably by Mr. Berryman, Mr. Moses and Mr. Jarrell, but they are as yet too few and inconsistent to have character. The influences, too, are too apparent, too unabsorbed—the poetic stream alternately choked with the excess murex of Dylan Thomas, or diluted with—dare we say?—*vin Audenaire*.

It is a relief to turn from this uneasiness and uncertainty, behind which there seems to be so little genuine compulsion, to a far less pretentious poet who, by comparison, is

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individual and all-of-a-piece, and who doesn't write as if it were painful to do so. Mr. Howard Nutt's "Special Laughter" is effortlessly contemporary, naughty, full of glee, but there is more to it than that. Mr. Nutt is a swift and natural phrase-maker, with a relish for words and rhythms, who can make magic if need be out of two shoes and a doormat; and by seeing his quotidian always and laconically *sub specie aeternitatis*, he gives it a macabre quality which is both new and alarming. The social problems can go hang —they are of importance only because Mr. Nutt succeeds in making a quite admirable and sinister poetry out of them. And that is all we can ask. CONRAD AIKEN

Marx and National Policy

The World of Nations, by Solomon F. Bloom. New York: Columbia University Press. 225 pages. $2.

"THE WORLD OF NATIONS" is a descriptive work about Marx's views on the problem of the nation and on specific national problems in various countries. Mr. Bloom did not try to write a controversial book, or to expose what was right or wrong with Marx. He set himself the task of summarizing and explaining Marx's thought and in this he has been wholly successful. His study is a scholarly work, making no concessions to transient trends or prejudices. With unusual fairness and objectivity, equipped with a profound knowledge of his subject, he compresses a wealth of reflection and research into his small volume. It will be of interest for the student of Marx as well as for those who know about him only from second or third-hand sources. Marx's changing views on tactical problems related to national policies in various countries may be a revelation for those who thought that he was merely a dogmatic and abstract thinker.

Bloom's survey of his thoughts on national differences leaves three definite impressions:

First: Marx frequently changed his position on tactical issues in various countries and on the more or less progressive role of the leading Western powers. In 1870, the experienced revolutionist and theoretician was for the support of Bismarck's war against France because he thought that the national unification of Germany would promote the most progressive forces in that country. After Napoleon's defeat at Sedan, Marx turned against the war, denounced its imperialist character, wrote against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and became the most ardent defender of the Paris Commune. He also repeatedly changed his opinion as to which nation was most progressive and where the socialist revolution would start. Until 1848, he put his hopes on France. After the defeat of the French revolution, he expected a revival of the Chartist movement in Britain; then he thought that Germany might assume a leading role in the world revolution, and finally he decided that the "center of world revolution" had shifted eastward.

Second: Marx was basically a "Westerner." He thought that a new socialist society would supersede capitalism in the Western world while other countries and continents (with the exception of the United States) still were economically backward, and without independent industrial economies. "The failure of the Revolution of 1848, the collapse of Chartism, the continued resilience of English capitalism, the maintenance of Tsarist rule—these and other factors played havoc with Marx's early scheme. The center of gravity remained largely in the West, but it became the uncertain center of an expanding orbit."

Third: Marx thought that the progress of industrialism in a backward country would inevitably bring about a repetition of the example of the French revolution. Then, when the German Reich was founded in 1871, Marx was convinced that "Bismarck and the groups he represented appeared to have signed their own death warrant when they unified the country and thus released irresistible forces which would make the bourgeoisie supreme. . . . The fact that a conservative monarchy, and not the liberal bourgeoisie or the democratic petty bourgeoisie, consolidated Germany, substantially strengthened that monarchy. Marx did not sufficiently appreciate the lasting political results of the methods of unification."

Bismarck was ousted from his position as chancellor of the Reich he had founded, and went into enforced political retirement, not as a result of a socialist revolution, but because of his feud with the new Kaiser who had become the protagonist of the new imperialist militarism.

Today it is easy to show that Marx's anticipation of a socialist revolution in the West was wrong, or at least premature. The West experienced the greatest rise of industrialism and of its world economic position only after Marx's death. But history has not yet spoken its final word. Western Europe is again accumulating tremendous explosive forces. We can visualize a new era of revolutionary struggles sweeping Europe under conditions which Marx could not perceive, but a Europe in which his ideas still play an important role. GUENTER REIMANN

Flatfoot on the Keys

Great Program Music: How to Enjoy and Remember It, by Sigmund Spaeth. Long Island, New York: Garden City Press. 357 pages. $1.49.

SIGMUND (THE TUNE DICK) SPAETH has written another book about music. "This book," he says in the preface, "is a compulsory sequel to 'Great Symphonies: How to Recognize and Remember Them,' an experiment which proved surprisingly successful," and then by way of turning a cold merciless light on those who didn't think so, he adds that there were exceptions, of course, among those "who evidently prefer to keep most listeners ignorant of what symphonies really are."

Spaeth's formula for recognizing, remembering and enjoying music is concerned largely with melodies. It is the formula which prompted his adoption of a subtitle, "The Tune Detective," bringing him onto the screen, the air, and even into court as an expert. Stated simply, the formula is to put jingles to themes. Take the Siegfried motif—"Hail to *Sig*-fried, *hee*-ro so *bold*—" then add "*want*-ing no *gold*"—and there you have it.

The book is addressed primarily to the layman, the TD says, and using a clue here and a clue there, he has pieced together elaborate stories behind famous pieces of program music. The Danse Macabre, for example, he interprets as a

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graveyard dance played by Death (Ole Fiddler) while skeletons clatter around the tombstones until a cock crows. Mr. Spaeth says it authoritatively in five pages and with jingles. His researches into Invitation to the Dance were even more exhausting. Whereas most people think of it as fairly simple in outline—boy meets girl, boy dances with girl—the TD has ferreted out an entire conversation which, if you remember it, will help you either to remember or recognize the tune, and it's worth noting that the women of his musical world are singularly quick on the uptake. To a timid "I beg your pardon, have we met by chance? May I ask you for this dance?" she counters with a quick-witted "Oh, sir! Oh, sir! Is this a sudden romance?" and when the clod comes back for more with "Let's talk about the weather, I believe it has been good," she bests him again with a coquettish "Oh, alackaday, I'm being wooed." Five pages of this sort of thing.

Beyond the range of Dr. Damrosch's first year in music appreciation, the TD loses the scent somewhat. To add to the listener's enjoyment and memory of Respighi's many popular tone poems, Spaeth has written three sentences mentioning two of them. Following a brief mention of Valse Triste and Finlandia, all the rest of Sibelius' program music is lumped together into a single sentence or ignored entirely. Scriabin and Delius, two prolific and fairly popular writers of descriptive music, merit one sentence each from the TD's pen. As for American music, he makes a brave start on MacDowell's To a Water Lily and kindred works, he has a few short paragraphs for Gershwin, a rather long description of the cop in John Alden Carpenter's Adventures in a Perambulator, and then the rest of whatever American composers are mentioned, are crowded into about as much space as it takes to list their names and one work each. Not all are mentioned, of course. Roy Harris, Sowerby, Gruenberg and several others are missing. But so, for that matter, are Schoenberg, Shostakovich and the entire school of Spanish composers including de Falla, Granados, Turina and Albeñiz. Guess the old dogs must have gotten tired.

STANLEY FERGUSON

Not for Art's

Life for Life's Sake: A Book of Reminiscences, by Richard Aldington. New York: The Viking Press. 411 pages. $3.

THERE IS A DISTANCE—recognized, respected, perhaps necessary, and apparently inevitable—between an artist's wisdom of life and the kind of life he lives, but this is a disparity on which it is usually not wise for him to presume. The greatest poets have honored it, not exploited it. They have put their wisdom into their poems and left their lives to speak for themselves. They have not written autobiographies. The few who did have approached the labor with little glibness or confidence; they have recognized it as the most difficult of all poetic and perhaps of all human tasks—the task of self-recognition, the ultimate test of sincerity. This supreme caution is seldom visible today. Autobiography has become as staple a product among authors and artists as among explorers, actors, generals, ex-Presidents and professional beauties. It is written at all ages from twenty to ninety and under all urges and motives, from the retailing of personal grudges and the easing of inhibitions to the need of justifying the failings or lapses of a misshapen career. A particular uneasiness of conscience seems to have accompanied the dislocations in life and thought of the past ten years; the spate of memoirs has never been thicker. Dwindling authors have made a veritable industry of intimate account-balancing, and the younger generation (especially in England) has made adolescent memoir-writing a new literary genre. The result—despite an occasional freshening of intelligence, clearing of the air, or instructive case-history in conflict and frustration—is that personal writing has sunk to a level of exhibitionism and journalistic nondescript from which the isolated mastery of Adams, Shaw, Moore, Yeats and Gide have been unable to lift it. An incidental misfortune of these books is that they usually sell their authors short. When a writer's life and ordeal are left implicit in his works he enjoys, whatever his limitations or defects, that last refuge of an ailing talent or reputation—the benefit of the doubt. When he undertakes to explain, the benefit is invariably transferred to his readers.

Mr. Aldington's memoirs breezily ignore the existence or value of such a benefit. They are readable, occasionally entertaining, and enlivened by some humorous if insensitive charm. They display a personality of considerable shrewd sense and modest judgment who relieved the hazards and humdrum of literary professionalism by his eager sense of the important things that were happening in the literary life of his time, by his contempt of provincialism, by his ambition to achieve a sound European scope and sympathy in his activities, and by his refusal to be taken in by the cliques and gangs of literary politics. Mr. Aldington never qualified as the original of Maugham's Alroy Kear. He gives familiar sidelights on pre-1914 life in England, Imagism in its first phase, Pound, Lawrence and the esthetic excitements of post-war Paris. A few passages are genuinely sensitive in evoking several historic moments that came to him in his lifetime—his pre-war middle-class schooling, his youthful discovery of the new poetry, and especially his return from the war to the bleak hostilities of civilian life, where the veterans found themselves an unwanted element among a public sated with soldier-worship and fearful of the competition of the demobilized who were looking for work in a lost world. But none of these experiences is seriously assessed or penetrated. The real test of reminiscence is never met: neither the author nor his friends take on meaning by their reactions on one another. The anecdotes dribble inconsequentially; we learn nothing new of Pound, Eliot or Lawrence beyond the commonplaces of talented eccentricity; a note of rather cheap resentment and meanness of spirit becomes inescapable; the author's self-depreciations become indistinguishable from his fluent depreciation of most things around him; and soon his aloofness to risk or gullibility suggests to us that while he may have succeeded in not being taken in, he in turn took in very little either.

Invulnerability is a dubious asset to a creative talent, and disillusioned realism can be more of a pitfall to an artist than the most reckless susceptibility. For him, above all men, sincerity can never finally be a conscious virtue. (That interesting exercise in sincerity, Maugham's "Summing Up," is worth studying on this score.) Some men—Adams, Blunt, Herzen, Gorki, Fitzgerald—have raised their failings as men or writers to a high level of significance by

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their genius in self-exposure. Mr. Aldington is not of their company. His book, aimless in shape and style and eventually trivial in quality, leaves us asking: Is this all that a vocation in literature adds up to? But of course justice and a final charitable curiosity require us to turn back to his books to see if they redeem the impression of erratic ambition and unconvinced purposes left by his memoirs. And what do we find there?

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL

Below the Potomac

The Mind of the South, by W. J. Cash. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 455 pages. $3.75.

LOVERS OF THE SOUTH and haters of the South alike are pretty sure to be outraged by Mr. Cash's analysis of the region—which is good reason to believe that it is not far from the truth. It is a reflective book, which will disgust the materialists; but its conclusions are based on careful and clear-eyed observation, which will disgust the idealists. In short, there is no reason why anyone should like the book except those who are more interested in knowing what the South is really like than in reinforcing any preconceived opinion about it.

Within the last dozen years the region below the Potomac has been examined with a thoroughness certainly equaling and perhaps excelling that given to any other part of the United States. The University of North Carolina Press alone has issued a long series of studies, all of which are good, and some of which are brilliant. Vance's "Human Geography of the South" and Odum's monumental "Southern Regions of the United States" are doubtless the best known, but they are only two out of a score of titles each of which commands respect for scholarship and intellectual integrity. But most of these are severely factual. Daniels' "A Southerner Discovers the South" touches the philosophical side, but touches it lightly. Not since Mims's "The Advancing South," published in 1926, has there been a comparable effort to examine the mentality of the region; and Mims's book was largely given over to special pleading.

In a sense Cash's work is special pleading, too, but it is an effort to establish, not a thesis, but a basis of understanding. The author is a Southerner and frankly a partisan of the South; but he is too intelligent to believe that a case can be made by ignoring the obvious crimes and barbarities of the region. He therefore sets himself the task not of palliating or excusing them, but of explaining the psychological factors that have created them. He makes a good job of it, too. He is not always convincing, but he is always plausible. It is possible that in some instances he can be refuted; but he can never be refuted without some careful thought.

Mr. Cash is a journalist, not an academician, and his book is written in the language of the streets, not that of the schools; but it is journalistic only in the sense that its language is simple and clear, avoiding technical terms and qualifying parentheses. The thought, however, is sometimes far from simple. The analysis of the psychological effect of Reconstruction, for example, requires close attention; the argument that a fanatical individualism and a fascistic cultural regimentation developed simultaneously is perfectly logical, if carefully followed, but hastily read it sounds like nonsense. Nevertheless, it is supported by the facts; the South is individualistic in its social philosophy, and it is—or it has been until recently—culturally regimented.

The cult of the Golden Age in the Old South makes no appeal whatever to Mr. Cash. He does not, however, fall into the error of dismissing it as unadulterated bosh. He thinks there were enough genuine aristocrats to afford a basis for the legend; but apparently he thinks that there are still about as many gentlemen of the old school in the South as there ever were; which is to say, a very small proportion of the total population. His argument, in short, is that the distinction between the Old South and the New is largely imaginary; the South is pretty much what it always was, due allowance being made for the effect of new factors in its environment.

Unromantic, unsentimental, cool, clear-headed, "The Mind of the South" does not furnish much support to anybody's theories, but it is nevertheless one of the most stimulating efforts at Southern self-criticism that have yet been made. The very fact that it was written by a Southerner living in the South—Mr. Cash is from North Carolina—is a better defense of the modern South than anything in its pages.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

Crimes of a Month

IF YOU WANT to get away with murder, which Somerset Maugham calls the most human of crimes, there appears to be a better chance for it if you can contrive to have an amateur, or a "consulting" detective on your trail. Of course you'll be found out, because these gentlemen are unbeatable, but fiction gives them a good bit of discretion after they've shown up the Yard or the Homicide Squad by catching the criminal, whereas a good police detective hasn't finished his job till he's not only spotted his man and caught him but turned him over to the law. Sherlock Holmes himself made pontifical gestures of mercy sometimes, even to letting one murderer go, with the solemn words: "You will soon have to answer to a higher court than the Assizes." That Rex Stout could manage to have his Archie Goodwin move into Baker Street to report one such case!

According to formula, the usual victim in a murder story is somebody whom a whole string of people have reasons for killing, and since the better the reasons the less the killing seems a crime than an act of justice, there's often a sentimental bias toward wanting the murderer to find his own punishment, or get off altogether. But fundamentally a detective story is a game with strict rules, based on the law that crime is something to be punished, and you get the purest exhibition of it when the law tackles its puzzle efficiently and does its whole job.

Richard Hull knows the rules and plays by them, but he's no follower of formulas. His "Beyond Reasonable Doubt" (Julian Messner) is tricky but fair: tricky because its very first sentence is the beginning of the prosecutor's address to a jury in a murder trial but you don't even know who is being tried till you're over three-quarters through the book. Viewed through the vivid personalities of the judge and the opposing counsel, a subtle crime and a subtle piece of detecting are dramatized for the jury with a dexterous

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cinematic weaving together of past and present, but with a unique kind of suspense for the reader. The victim is a thoroughly obnoxious human being, but a human being and not a straw man, and you are rooting for his murderer whoever it turns out to be. And here Mr. Hull pulls off his most remarkable feat: he satisfies the law and the reader both. Mr. Hull is one of the best at the detective-story game, with stuff as straight as a Notable British Trial and no fancy frills.

In "Good Night, Sheriff" (Random House) Harrison R. Steeves goes against the formula by having a fine and well loved woman shot for no apparent reason in the world. Whether it was anything but an accident might never have been taken up seriously if an insurance investigator hadn't had to look into it as a routine chore. What he found out, up in a New England village, makes a tale that belongs somewhere on the same shelf with "Trent's Last Case." Mr. Steeves lands in the professional class at the first crack, with a slick surprise in his ammunition.

Craig Rice's "The Right Murder" (Simon and Schuster) is Chicago and flashy—three hard-drinking amateurs out-sleuthing a dumb cop, and with both plot and characters equally unreal. "The Snark Was a Boojum" (Morrow) is what you might have expected if you could have thought what to expect—needled with the kind of humor that comes from several women in a race to produce offspring to meet the terms of one of those fantastic wills.

Hildegarde Withers pursues her snoopery in a Hollywood studio in Stuart Palmer's "The Puzzle of the Happy Hooligan" (Crime Club). She is easier to bear in a movie, where you can enjoy her as Edna May Oliver instead of having to take her seriously as a solver of mysteries. And Asey Mayo keeps on with Cape Cod murders in Phoebe Atwood Taylor's "The Perennial Boarder" (Norton), amid homely props and slathers of plausible Cape Cod gabble. These two for the serial fans. MORT. POST

Contributors

TOM WINTRINGHAM was an officer in the British Battalion of the Loyalist army in Spain and is now in charge of the Osterley Park training school, near London, in which Home Guards are taught new principles of war based on Spanish war experiences. His latest book is "New Ways of War," published by Penguin Books.

FRANCIS E. MCMAHON is identified in an editor's note preceding his article.

VALENTINE ACKLAND, an English poet, lives in a village frequently visited by German raiders. She is co-author, with Sylvia Townsend Warner, of a book of verse, "Whether a Dove or a Seagull."

H. STEINHAUER is professor of German Literature at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada. He is the author of "Das Deutsche Drama" and other works on German literature.

CONRAD AIKEN lives at Brewster, Massachusetts, where he and his wife, Mary Hoover Aiken, run a summer school for writers and painters. His latest book is a sonnet sequence, "And in the Human Heart."

GUENTER REIMANN, a German economist now living in New York City, is completing a new book, "The Myth of the Total State: Europe's Last Bid for World Rule," to be published by William Morrow and Company in September.

STANLEY FERGUSON is on the staff of a weekly paper in Washington and writes the "On the Records" column for The New Republic.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL edited the anthology, "Literary Opinion in America." He is soon to publish a critical study of nineteenth-century English poetry and a book on Yeats.

GERALD W. JOHNSON has been an editorial writer on The Baltimore Evening Sun since 1926. He is the author, among other books, of "The Wasted Land."

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